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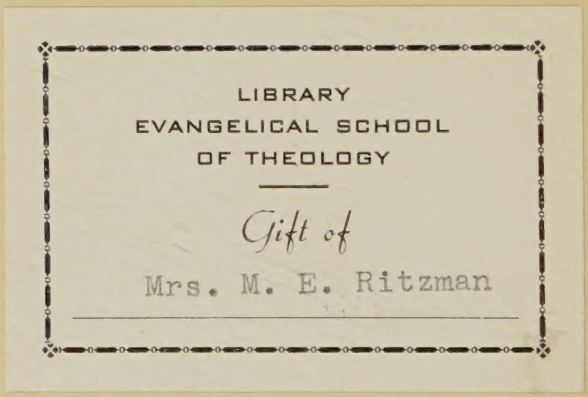
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RECENT PSYCHOLOGY AND THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

CYRIL E. HUDSON, M.A.

RECENT PSYCHOLOGY AND THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

Some Points of Contact and Divergence

BY

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PREFATORY NOTE

The title of this volume sufficiently indicates both its purpose and its limitations. It is not a treatise on either psychology or religion, and large and important departments of both are entirely ignored. But, for good or ill, great efforts are being made at the present time to popularise the conclusions of current psychological inquiries, and there seems room and need for more discussion of these inquiries from the point of view of Christian faith and practice than has as yet been given to them. What I have written may conceivably do something to help forward such discussion.

C. E. H.

Kensington.

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RECENT PSYCHOLOGY AND THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

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Chapter I

"THE UNCONSCIOUS"

I PROPOSE in these chapters to consider the bearings, on religious faith and practice, of some current conceptions in psychological thought. One frequently meets, nowadays, the phrase "The New Psychology." It implies—and the implication is justified—a fairly sharp dividing-line between those conceptions of mental structure and mental processes now dominant in psychological thought, and those current only a few years ago. One naturally looks about, therefore, for some jumping-off ground, some obvious starting-point. What are the doctrines, fundamental to the new schools, to which the older psychologists paid what the moderns consider insufficient attention? The answer to this question can hardly be in any doubt. Let me quote a passage from William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, the famous course of Gifford Lectures delivered in 1901-1902:—

"I cannot but think that the most important step forward that has occurred in psychology since I have been a student of that science is the discovery, first made in

1886, that, in certain subjects at least, there is not only the consciousness of the ordinary field, but an addition thereto in the shape of a set of memories, thoughts, and feelings which are extra-marginal and outside of the primary consciousness altogether, but yet must be classed as conscious facts of some sort, able to reveal their presence by unmistakable signs. I call this the most important step forward, because, unlike the other advances which psychology has made, this discovery has revealed to us an entirely unsuspected peculiarity in the constitution of human nature. No other step forward which psychology has made can proffer any such claim as this." [1]

This development has indeed been revolutionary. It is not so very long ago that the subject-matter of psychology was practically confined to what is called "the field of consciousness," with the result that the psychologist, examining the contents of his own mind so far as it was open to him, and being in most cases an intellectual person, with the reasoning faculty highly developed, proceeded to generalisations as to the content and functions of other people's minds, and, in particular, attributed to their reasoning faculty the preponderating place in conduct which it held in his own. We shall see later that the modern psychologist assigns a strictly subordinate place to reason in the determinaton of conduct. But first let us briefly discuss this conception of extra-marginal consciousness and the facts on which it is based.

We are faced at the outset with a slight difficulty, arising from the many meanings attaching to the word "subconscious"—using the word for a moment in a very wide and non-technical sense as comprising all those contents of the mind which at any given moment are outside the range of conscious attention.

[1] *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 233.

It is clear that in this general sense of the *fringe* or *margin* of the mind no objection can be raised to the conception of "subconsciousness": for example, the contents of the reader's mind and mine are not exhausted by the "cognitions," the "affects," and the "conations" with which they are at this moment employed: they contain, also, other ideas and memories which the appropriate stimulus would arouse. But it is not in this sense that we use, nowadays, the word subconscious. Nor, further, do we identify it—as does another use of the term—with the purely physiological, to express the change in the actual brain material which presumably accompanies every mental process—even such processes, "mental" though in the last analysis we must consider them, as reflex and instinctive bodily movements. The modern psychologist, as a matter of fact, hardly employs the term "subconscious" at all: to him, that part of the mind to which he attaches the greatest importance is more aptly designated the *Un*conscious. By "the contents of the Unconscious," or by "unconscious experience," as these and similar expressions are used by psychological writers at the present day, reference is not intended to those contents of the mind from which at any given moment conscious attention is being withheld, nor to ideas, etc., which can be brought into the stream of consciousness by the ordinary processes of memory or association, but to those which are normally inaccessible to consciousness altogether, and can only be recalled under certain conditions or by certain special methods. In the sense, that is to say, in which I shall use it in this book, the Unconscious is the unknown, not the unknowing part of the mind: the distinction is of

great importance. It is possible that to those unfamiliar with these subjects such a conception as this may seem a contradiction in terms—as indeed it does to some highly competent critics. How can we speak with any accuracy of "unconscious mentality"? The objection loses its force, however, if grounds exist for the refusal to regard "mentality" and "consciousness" as convertible terms—grounds which the modern psychologist, basing his position on facts to which we shall have frequent occasion to notice as we proceed, categorically affirms.

It is of great importance to recognise, further, that this conception of the Unconscious is an *hypothesis* designed to fit certain observed facts. No one has ever seen an Unconscious! It is conceivable that, as our knowledge increases, some other hypothesis may be propounded which will serve better than the one now current to cover these facts: but in the meantime the standard by which we judge the conception of the Unconscious must surely be the pragmatic one. Does it throw light on the facts? Judged by this standard, it must be said that the hypothesis has so far proved superior to any other that has been suggested.

The class of phenomena which the hypothesis of the Unconscious has been designed to explain consists for the most part of abnormal mental states. It is, indeed, a fundamental tenet of the new psychology that its principles are applicable to the normal as well as to the abnormal mind. Nevertheless, since the observations on which the greater number of these principles are founded have been made, for the most part, by students of mental pathology, it is easier to illustrate them by instances drawn from the records

made by such students. The following is a summary of a case described by Dr. W. H. R. Rivers in his book, *Instinct and The Unconscious:* I choose it almost at random:—

"For as long as he could remember, this patient had been subject to a dread of confined spaces so severe, and producing states so painful and unendurable, that he was debarred from taking part in many of the ordinary occupations of life, or could do so only at the risk of suffering and discomfort. When his profession as a doctor took him at the age of thirty to the front, his specific dread was brought into pronounced activity by the necessity of working in dug-outs, and the strain so produced formed a most important factor in producing a state of anxiety-neurosis. During a course of treatment to discover the origin of his claustrophobia, there came to the patient's consciousness an experience at the age of four, in which he had been confined in a narrow passage with no means of escape from a dog by which he was terrified. In spite of attempts, continued over several years, to discover some experience of childhood which could explain his symptoms, this memory of the dog in a passage had wholly failed to appear in consciousness, and was only brought to memory by a special procedure. We have no direct evidence that the incident had been wholly unconscious during childhood, but owing to his prolonged search for such experience at a later period of life, and its total failure to appear in consciousness, we have the most decisive evidence that an arresting experience, one accompanied by an emotional state of the most poignant kind, can lie dormant and evade the most searching attempts to bring it into the field of consciousness. When it was at last recalled, this did not happen through any association of waking life, but came in the semi-waking state following a dream. . . . This patient not only affords conclusive evidence for the existence of experience shut off from consciousness under ordinary conditions, but his case shows that this experience, though inac-

cessible to consciousness directly, may yet be capable of affecting it indirectly." [2]

The reader will notice that the man here described had searched his memory in vain for the buried experience, and this in spite of the fact that he knew —or at any rate suspected—precisely the *kind* of thing he was looking for in his past history.

But suppose we try to remember what we were doing at this time yesterday, we have no difficulty whatever in doing so. There is, that is to say, a region of the mind not actually present in the ordinary conscious field, which nevertheless *is* accessible to consciousness by ordinary methods. To this region the new psychology gives the name *Fore*conscious: in it are stored the ideas, memories, experiences, emotions and what not, which we have the power to call up into the stream of attentive consciousness at will.

There, then, is the psychologist's picture of the structure of the mind: Consciousness, Foreconscious, Unconscious. It will be necessary to remember the particular signification attaching to these three words in order to understand what follows.

Whence, then, is the Unconscious replenished? Or, to put it in another way, why is there anything in it at all? why should any past experience be buried? These, clearly, must be our next questions. And we shall, I think, answer them best by giving some attention at this point to another conception which occupies an important place in modern psychology: I mean the conception of the Complex.

[2] *Instinct and The Unconscious: A Contribution to a Biological Theory of the Psycho-Neuroses*, p. 9.

We have already observed one of the points of divergence between the new and the older psychological schools. Attention must now be called to another. Few things are more striking in recent books than the preponderating part assigned to the instincts in the determination of conduct; and, conversely, the depreciation of the "will," considered as a separate, individual faculty, as a factor in the lives either of men or of societies. Now, the instincts —which may be classified in various ways, but on any showing are so many aspects of three universal factors, *viz.* the self, the "herd," and sex—are those "innate psychophysical dispositions," to use Professor McDougall's phrase, which we inherit from a remote animal ancestry and with which we enter upon life endowed. The mind of a newborn baby is not a blank page; it is characterised by these indestructible and unescapable tendencies. In themselves these tendencies do not constitute character—a baby has no "personality" worth the name—and the creation of personality and character is the result of the impact of experience and environment on these instincts: personality is created by the action and interaction of these inborn driving forces and impulses on the one hand, and the external world on the other. We must notice, further, that each instinct has a certain definite feeling and emotion attaching to it. Thus, the instinct of flight from danger is accompanied by the feeling of fear: the instinct of repulsion (from certain smells and tastes, and from physical contact with slimy and slippery substances) by the feeling of disgust: the instinct of curiosity (in face of an object like, but not quite like, anything the individual

has come across before) by the feeling of wonder, and so on. Now, as a child grows older, his mind, as the result of the contact of experience with his instinctive impulses, gradually forms *systems of connected ideas and emotions.* To such a system, characterised by tendencies to produce action of a certain definite character, psychology gives the name of a "complex"—a word of great importance.

McDougall enumerates twelve instincts: flight, pugnacity, repulsion, curiosity, self-assertion, self-abasement, parental instinct, sex feeding, gregariousness, acquisition, and construction. It is clear that complexes formed by the action of environment and external circumstances upon the energy of these instincts may be almost infinite in number and in character. It is also clear—and this is the point I wish to emphasise—that any two of these complexes may be incompatible with one another. Consider two simple illustrations:—Suppose a man to be in love with some one else's wife. He is the victim of two opposing complexes: one of these, based on his sex instinct, urges him to follow his passion; the other, based on his gregariousness, and his consequent sensitiveness to the opinions and judgments of the society in which he lives,[3] reminds him of what people will say, of the prohibitions of morality and religion, and so on. The result is *conflict,* with its accompanying emotional tension and disturbance. Or, again, imagine the case of a boy brought up in an easy and comfortable home, sheltered from the hardness and roughness of the world, and with no reason in his own circumstances to doubt that honesty is the best policy and that all's for the best in this

[3] See Chapter V.

best of all possible worlds. Then suppose him, in early manhood, to be plunged for the first time into the vortex of life as it really is. He is now overwhelmed with facts of which previously he has hardly suspected the existence, with selfishness and cruelty and suffering and inequality and sin. Where, now, are his comfortable doctrines of the love of God and the natural kindliness of men? His peace of mind is gone until he can quell the *conflict* which his new experience has produced in him—the conflict arising as the result of the formation of a new complex incompatible with many of his old ones.

In both these imaginary cases, the problem to be solved is one of interior conflict. Now, the human mind appears to be constituted that it cannot allow this condition to persist—it seeks above all things peace and equilibrium—and it possesses ingenious methods by which this state of conflict is removed. To some of these methods I shall return; but I want at this point to make a short digression, into another department of science, which will help us to understand the most important of them when we come to consider it.

I have already quoted from the late Dr. Rivers' important and suggestive book, *Instinct and The Unconscious*. Its chief value, perhaps, lies in the author's attempt to relate the conclusions of psychology, and the phenomena on which they are based, to certain newly discovered biological facts.

Experiments on his own arm made by Dr. Henry Head, and observations upon patients who have suffered physical lesion in the brain, go to show that under certain conditions the adult human organism may revert to forms of instinctive reaction which are

not normally proper, or even possible, to it, belonging rather to the lower animal world, and in some sense also to the human infant. Rivers suggested, on the basis of these and other facts, that one factor in evolution has been the *suppression*[4] of instinctive reactions, and of the feeling-tones associated with them.

The biological significance of such a racial process is obvious; it may be illustrated by considering the various instinctive reactions to danger. The chief of these are flight, aggression, "manipulative activity," immobility, and collapse: with each of these are associated certain more or less definite feeling-states. Now, it is clear that the "survival value" of any of these reactions will be greatly lessened—will, indeed, in some cases be destroyed—unless the tendency to the other kinds of reaction, and the emotions attaching to these other kinds, are completely and satisfactorily suppressed. Thus, an animal whose best chance in the face of danger lies in absolute immobility, cannot afford to be disturbed by an impulse to run away. Natural selection must long ago have brought it about that arboreal man should not be similarly disturbed, or his consciousness confused, by the emotion of fear. It must be noticed, however, that the suppression of an instinctive reaction need not—indeed, must not—involve its absolute destruction.

"One form of instinctive reaction, the suppression of which has been shown to be necessary under certain con-

[4] Rivers' use of the words "suppression" and "repression" is peculiar. He reserves the latter for *"witting* suppression," and by "suppression" he means what most writers of the psychoanalytical school refer to as "*re*pression."

ditions, is that of flight, whether by movements of swimming in the water or of running upon the ground. Although these movements may need suppression, either in the interests of the alternative instinct of immobility or of a new mode of existence, the older instinct may still be needed at times. It is essential that its mechanism shall remain intact, ready to be utilised whenever it is needed. For most animals it is essential that the mechanism for each kind of reaction shall be present ready to be called into activity if the need should arise. This is so even if one mode of reaction is habitual, while the need for the other may only arise once in a lifetime or may always lie dormant." [5]

Finally, we may notice that in the amphibian—and there is good reason to believe that man has passed through an amphibian stage—it must be supposed that there are two sets of mental apparatus, one for water life and one for life on dry land, and that each set is subject to suppression when the animal is living the life requiring the other set.

What this digression amounts to, then, is this: that there is the closest connexion between the Unconscious and instinct, and that the Unconscious is the storehouse of experience associated with instinctive reactions suppressed from consciousness because of their unsuitability to, or inadequacy for the individual's normal, conscious life. The advance of the race has involved the increasing suppression of instinctive reactions and of their affective accompaniments. In other words, we have found *a biological explanation for the necessity to avoid psychical conflict.* (The reader will remember that before I branched off into this discussion I was insisting that the mind seeks at all costs peace and equilibrium,

[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 69.

that it cannot allow the state of conflict to persist, and that it possesses ingenious powers of resolving it.)

Let us return to the example of the coddled youth suddenly cast upon the world. One of the ways of resolving a conflict is by the separation of the two opposing complexes in the mind. In the case referred to, the man would ignore the traditions and atmosphere of his home life while he was engaged in his work in the outside world, and would ignore the conditions of the outside world whenever he returned to his home. The two complexes would be kept in "logic-tight" compartments of his mind.

Another method of getting rid of a conflict is by the process known as *rationalisation,* which may be defined as the involuntary, or only half-voluntary, manufacture of false reasons. In a subsequent chapter will be found some discussion of "herd instinct," that mental factor which renders us more susceptible to the dictates and judgments of the society in which we live than to any other outside influence. At this point we may simply observe the fact of the average man's extraordinary unwillingness to admit that his ideas or his conduct are the result of anything else but his own unaided choice and reason. Clearly, then, the mental mechanism known as rationalisation not only serves to eliminate a certain number of conflicts in advance, but is exceedingly useful in dealing with a conflict which has actually arisen—especially, perhaps, when one of the opposing complexes is based on herd instinct. Mr. W. Trotter has described with fine irony the case of the man who, faced with an interior conflict between the facts of life and a complex based on his membership in an ecclesiastical "herd,"

"comes to see how right the herd view really is; that it is a very narrow mind which cannot see the intrinsic excellence of suffering; that the sheep and cattle we breed for eating, the calf we bleed to death that its meat may be white, the one baby out of four we kill in the first year of life, that cancer, consumption, and insanity, and the growing river of blood which bathes the feet of advancing mankind, all have their part in the increasing Purpose which is leading the race ever upwards and onwards to a divine consummation of joy. Thus the conflict ceases, and the man is content to let the blood and the Purpose go on increasing together, and to put on flesh unperplexed by the shallow and querulous scruples of his youth." [6]

[6] *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*, p. 53.

Chapter II

"THE UNCONSCIOUS" (Continued)

A THIRD, and more radical method of dealing with conflict is by the *repression* of one of the complexes concerned. This phenomenon is of such importance that it must be dealt with at some length. As the description of it proceeds, the reader will appreciate the relevance of the biological digression a few pages back.

By repression, in this connection, is meant much more than a mere "bottling-up" nothing less, in fact, than the complete banishment of the complex to the Unconscious, that deep region of the mind which is not accessible to our voluntary recall at any moment of our willing, conscious life. The chief significance, moreover, of the repression of a complex lies in the highly important fact that the Unconscious, as we have seen, is not a grave, but a laboratory; not a storehouse, but a mill. Repressed into the Unconscious, a complex does not cease to exist, nor does it become inert: rather, it is continually striving to return to consciousness, and to exercise that influence and power which it enjoyed before its repression—which, in fact, were responsible for its repression. And it sometimes *does* find the outlet into the conscious stream for which it is continually striving; but, when it returns, it does so in a very curious way.

We should naturally expect that the mind which

is capable of repressing a complex in the thorough way I have described would be provided, also, with the means of preventing its return to consciousness and the renewal of its disturbing influence there. Such a restraining force the mind does in fact possess, representing the controlling forces of society, public opinion, morality, religion—the "sum-total," in short, "of the repressing inhibitions of the herd" [1]—and spoken of by psychologists under the striking metaphor of the *Censor*. The censor acts as a sort of official, whose duty—I beg the reader to remember that we are speaking in metaphors, "picture language"!—it is to see to it that a repressed complex *is* repressed, and does not return to disturb the surface regions of the mind which has banished it. If it is to return, then, it must somehow dodge the Censor. And this, as I said just now, a repressed complex does sometimes manage to do. It does so by *adopting a disguise,* so that when it presents itself at the portals which divide the Unconscious from the upper regions of the mind, the Censor who stands sentinel there may be deceived into letting it pass as harmless and inoffensive.

Now, it has been established beyond question that a great many of those pathological conditions —vaguely and euphemistically classed as "nerve troubles"—which constitute one of the curses of this age are the symbolic (*i.e.* disguised) expressions of repressed complexes. Among these conditions may be included hysteria, obsessions, phobias, and some forms of insanity. It would be superfluous to dilate upon the enormous importance of this discovery: it is clear that when you have found the source of a malady you are more than half-way to

[1] Ernest Jones, *Papers on Psychoanalysis.*

finding its cure. Nor is it necessary to give copious illustrations. I have already quoted one[2]: and, if a further example be needed, we may recall the classic case[3] of an old woman in an asylum who for year after year spent the whole of her waking time in the mechanical performance of the actions of a shoemaker at his work. Investigation proved, first, that her insanity dated from the time when, as a girl, she had been jilted; secondly, that the faithless lover was a shoemaker. What had happened was that the circumstances connected with the breaking-off of the woman's engagement, forming a complex conflicting with the rest of the contents of her mind, had been repressed into the Unconscious. This repression had not, however, destroyed the complex, which had, on the contrary, displayed such subterranean activity as to drive the woman mad, and revealed itself in a symbolic action easily comprehensible when—but only when—the details of her history were known.

The examples of repression given just now have been drawn from the records of pathology. But, as I have remarked, the modern psychologist suggests that the mechanisms which manifest themselves with such startling clearness in cases of mental derangement are only exaggerated forms of those possessed by the normal mind, and that many of the principles and "laws" formulated (mainly) as the result of observation of the abnormal are applicable also to the normal. The analogy of the physical part of man's nature would lead us to expect this: it is

[2] P. 15.
[3] Quoted by Dr. Bernard Hart, *The Psychology of Insanity*, p. 115.

well known that we owe much of our knowledge of ordinary bodily functions to the study of disease.

The Unconscious is the receptacle of many ideas and complexes which have been repressed for slighter reasons than those involved in cases which subsequently become pathological. There seems to be in the minds of all of us a tendency to rid ourselves of all and sundry ideas, problems, associations, memories, worries, etc., which by their presence in consciousness help to produce just that condition of conflict which by our nature we are impelled to try and avoid. The result is that the Unconscious of every individual is the happy hunting-ground of what may be called minor complexes. These also, like the more serious ones referred to, seek to return to consciousness. This they can only do, like the others, in disguise. In pathological cases, a repressed complex expresses itself in consciousness as a symptom; in normal men and women as a symbol. Recent psychological research suggests that a large number of the trivial and otherwise inexplicable happenings of daily life—slips of the tongue or pen, forgetting of names or incidents, failure to remember appointments, and similar unimportant mistakes of various kinds—are in reality the indirect manifestations of minor repressed complexes.

This is a very fascinating subject: it would be beyond the scope and purpose of this book to discuss it exhaustively, or even adequately, here. The reader must be referred to the classical treatment of it in Freud's *Psychopathology of Everday Life,* and the first part of his recently-translated *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*[4]. A good

[4] London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.

many of Freud's conclusions in this department must strike any reader who is not blinded by his brilliance and ingenuity as far-fetched and unwarranted, but no unbiassed critic can deny that he makes out a strong case, supported by a wealth of illustrations, for what at first sight seem the most preposterous theories: as, for instance, that we never forget anything but what, unconsciously, we wish to forget; or that when on the spur of the moment we "think of a number," there is a quite definite reason, ascertainable by certain methods, for the particular number that rises to consciousness; or that every trivial mistake in speech or writing is similarly determined. Only on a strictly deterministic and materialistic basis, it is true, can such theories be defended *in toto,* but with a little knowledge of psychology the average man can find illustrations in his own experience of the truth of some of them—or of the element of truth, perhaps, in all of them. Let me give one or two examples I have come across myself:—

A curious misprint occurred recently in *The Times,* when a prominent statesman was reported as saying: "Let us stick to the things that are nearest, and first of all Re*french*ment." No doubt the compositor was a Francophil!

Till recently, I found myself over and over again, when emptying the pockets of a suit of clothes which I was changing for another, forgetting to take out my cigarette-case with the other things. Obviously, this might be explained as the expression of my conviction—a conviction repressed because of its unwelcome character—that I smoke too many cigarettes.

My wife tells me that when returning the calls of strangers who have called on her—a duty for which she has no great liking—in nine cases out of ten, when the servant opens the door to her, she has forgotten the name of the person whom she has come to see.

A man of my acquaintance, who sent me a parcel of books he was lending me, asked me to return them in person if possible, but to remember, if the friend who shared his flat was at home, that the latter was an invalid and liable to be excited by the least argument or discussion, the disease from which he suffered being responsible for this. But he spelt disease *decease!*

(In writing down the last two sentences, I made no less than three trivial mistakes. The man in question is alive, and may conceivably read the present volume: hence, I suppose, a suggestion from my Unconscious not to include this example.)

Another man assured me recently that the only flesh meat he can eat with any enjoyment is pork and bacon. He happens to be a Jew, but he moves in circles peculiarly antipathetic to Jews, and is at considerable pains to conceal his nationality. He did not know that I was aware of it.

The principle at work in all these cases is easily recognisable: no doubt the reader could furnish examples, from his own experience, of similar disguised minor complexes. They are common enough. Thus, the length of an unknown poet's hair usually leaves no room for doubt that he *is* a poet; it is the symbolisation of his ego-complex, which an unappreciative, ungrateful world prevents from enjoying the expression it longs for. Or, again, it is sometimes

found that a desire to be continually washing the hands goes together with a secret morally objectionable habit. This last instance is a good illustration of a common result of the censorship, viz. "the exaggerated appearance in the superficial layers of the mind of the opposite quality to that belonging to the repressed complex."[5]

But it is in dreams that the Unconscious really comes into its own. The interpretation of dreams has been one of the favourite methods employed by wizards and dabblers in the occult for thousands of years; and it is interesting to see how the content of the magic and superstition of other ages has become the content of science in our own. The scientific study of dreams is still young, but its foundations have been well and truly laid by Sigmund Freud, whose work in this department represents one of the most valuable of his contributions to psychology. The Freudian theory of dreams is exceedingly complicated and thorough: its adequate discussion would require several chapters. But some of its main principles are of such importance that they may be briefly summarised, without an attempt even to outline their justification.

In the first place, the great majority of dreams—perhaps all the dreams of adults—are the symbolic expression of repressed *wishes*.[6]

[5] Bernard Hart, *Psychology of Insanity*.

[6] It should be observed that the word "wish" in this connection is used by Freud in a special sense. The following quotation from Professor James Drever's *Psychology of Everyday Life* will make this clear: "Ordinarily by 'wish' we understand appetitive tendency in its most general form, so long as there is an idea of an object present to the self. It is a more general word than 'desire,' because known impossibility of attainment will inhibit desire, while the wish may still remain. By 'wish' Freud means this general appetitive tendency, but he means more than this.

Secondly: the real meaning of a dream is never to be found in the dream as remembered and related on waking. Behind this "manifest content," which consists of symbols and disguises, often supplied by the dreamer's conscious experience of the last day or two, and imposed on the repressed wish by the censor, lies the "latent content" of the dream, and this latent content must be uncovered if we would know the dream's real significance.

Thirdly: this latent content can be discovered, by the technique, invented by Professor Freud, for which the word *psychoanalysis* ought in strictness to be reserved. In this process, as applied to dreams, the dreamer allows his mind to dwell in turn on each incident and object of the manifest content of the dream as he recalls it, rejecting *no* mental memory or association that "comes into his head" during the process: then, sooner or later, the underlying complexes and wishes symbolised by these objects and incidents are discovered, and the latent content and real meaning of the dream revealed. I say "sooner or later": the latent content of many of the dreams of healthy, normal people can often be discovered without much difficulty—one can begin the analysis of one's own dreams while shaving!—but the dreams of neurotics are a different matter.

Fourthly: there are a large number of what may

The general appetitive tendency we call 'wish' always implies for us a certain fairly high degree of mental synthesis, since it implies the existence of personal consciousness. It is 'we' who wish, not the tendency itself. In the case of successful repression of an appetitive tendency, we should not say that we still wish the satisfaction of the tendency. On the other hand, Freud would include under the term *the tendency itself seeking satisfaction* in such a case. Hence in the Freudian theory *'wish' is to be understood of individual tendencies and complexes,* as well as of the self as a whole" (p. 140: the italics are mine).

be called "typical" dreams—dreams, that is to say, which occur in the sleep of most people at some time or another. It is probable that these typical dreams conceal, no matter who dreams them, the same latent content.

Fifthly: the latent content of an enormous number of dreams is sexual in character—grossly sexual, judged by the standard of our waking, conscious judgment.

Sixthly: it seems to be beyond doubt that a great many of the commoner dream-symbols are to be referred to the experience of our very earliest years. Thus, Freud suggests that the common dream that one is naked or very scantily clad is an echo of the artless exhibitionism sometimes found in childhood; and that dreams of flying, falling, hovering, etc., have reference to

> "the movement games which have such extraordinary attraction for the child. What uncle has never made a child fly by running across the room with it with arms outstretched, or has never played falling with it by rocking it on his knee and then suddenly stretching out his leg, or by lifting it up high and then pretending to withdraw support?" [7]

These examples refer to the symbols used in dreams; but there is a considerable amount of evidence that the latent content of a dream may itself be a wish which has been buried in the Unconscious since early childhood. It is beyond question, for example, that some neurotic conditions are the result of an over-emphasised—"fixated," in technical language—affection, in infancy, for the parent belonging to the

[7] *Interpretation of Dreams*, p. 237. (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.)

opposite sex to the patient—a fixation from which the patient has never really freed himself, but which, because of its incompatibility with the conditions, and especially with the normal sexual impulses, of adult life, has been repressed into the Unconscious. This unsavoury topic—the workings of what is called the Œdipus-complex—forms the subject of several modern novels. It is treated with something approaching to genius in Miss Rebecca West's latest book, *The Judge*.

The infantile character of many dreams and repressed complexes is of great importance. For it gives a further clue to the nature and contents of the Unconscious. It is the home of Phantasy. Childhood is the time *par excellence* of phantasy-making, and children display their fondness for it quite openly and naturally in their "let's pretend" attitude, and their devotion to any one who can "tell them a story." But phantasy does not cease with childhood. One of the easiest ways of escape from the stern realities of actual life is to retire, in a brown study or a day-dream, into an imaginary world where we are always the hero, where all our ambitions are satisfied, and none of our desires frustrated.

Perhaps the most striking instance of phantasy on a large scale is to be found in the Christian Science movement. The problem of pain has exercised mankind for thousands of years, and every variety of solution has been propounded. But it has been reserved for Mrs. Eddy and her followers to persuade multitudes of people that it does not exist. Christian Science betrays the essential feature of all phantasy in giving, as it were, a *twist*—and such a twist!—to reality in the desire to escape from it.

For most of us a reasonable amount of phantasy-making—or "introversion," as it is sometimes called—is no great evil. But we should recognise its essential character as a revolt against reality: and it is clear that a thoroughgoing "introvert," dwelling continually in an unreal world, occupied with images and conceptions which have no relation to his actual duties, is in danger of becoming incapable of dealing with his real environment. The bridge, in fact, between introversion of this type and insanity itself, when the pauper imagines himself to be Mr. Rockefeller, or the work-weary woman is convinced that she is the rightful queen of England, is perilously easy to cross. The danger of introversion lies in its regressive character. It is a return to the mentality of childhood, in which there are no duties, but only rights; no ideals, but only wishes; no You and Them, but only ME AND WHAT I WANT. It is the substitution of the "pleasure-principle" for the "reality-principle."

We saw at the outset that the conception of the Unconscious is the keystone of the New Psychology. From one point of view, what we have been doing so far is to learn something about the character of the Unconscious. Not the least important inference to be drawn from our inquiries is the conclusion that the Unconscious represents the individual equivalent of the human race's past—archaic, primordial, undisciplined, non-moral; the receptacle of what decency, ethics, good taste, and religion forbid—and that it is vitally related to every process of the whole mental and physical organism of man.

There is one other psychological concept about which a word must be said. We have seen that the Unconscious is the best working hypothesis to repre-

sent the structure of the mind. It is, similarly, necessary to assume the existence of a dynamic *force* in the mind to account for the fact that it possesses powers and functions at all. The technical name for this force is *Libido*. The word is used by Freud, in what seems a narrow and restricted sense, for the sexual impulse: this is because, in his view, that impulse is the ultimate source of all human activity. If we refuse to accept this view in its extreme form, we may well adopt that connotation of the word *libido* given to it by Jung and his school. Basing his use of it on the sense in which it is found in Cicero and other classical writers, Jung regards *libido* as

"a concept of unknown nature, comparable to Bergson's *élan vital;* an hypothetical energy of life, which occupies itself, not only in sexuality, but in various physiological and psychological manifestations such as growth, hunger, development, and all the human activities and interests."[8]

Libido, then, is the cosmic energy, urge, drive, behind all animate life. It is thus the force behind the instincts, which may be regarded as so many channels for its conveyance: it is also, clearly, the energy inherent in any complex, normal or abnormal, resulting from the action of experience upon the instincts. Further, it can be diverted from one channel to another: thus, the sexual instinct may be so directed, educated, and transformed that the *libido* attaching to it is made available for creative work of an artistic or intellectual character. This process of diversion is known as *Sublimation.* Unsublimated, *libido* would seem to be directly utilitarian, from a biological point

[8] Dr. Beatrice Hinckle, in her Introduction to Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious.*

of view: sublimated, it may assume a character good or bad as the case may be. To this all-important subject of sublimation we must return. In the mean time, it may be worth while to notice that when the modern psychologist speaks of the "sublimation of *libido*" there is some danger of the ordinary man being alienated and repelled by what appears to him as unnecessary jargon! After all, every intelligent parent has always known all this: long before any one had ever heard of sublimation, still less of *libido,* parents and teachers recognised that more than half the art of education consists in finding the proper outlets for the child's energy, and in providing substitute-channels for energy which is being devoted, or may come to be devoted, to activities and behaviour likely to be injurious to the child's well-being in the long run. All this is no doubt true; but it would be as unfortunate as it would be unreasonable to condemn the new teaching about mental structure and processes, on the ground that much of its phraseology is novel and peculiar; yet there is some danger of this happening among a certain section of the public which prides itself on its "common sense" and "practicality." Psychology, when all is said, is assuredly not the only branch of knowledge with a language of its own! It is a young science, and while it is largely occupied with phenomena to which little or no scientific attention has been paid until comparatively recent years, it finds itself also moving in regions, familiar indeed, but, as it were, unnamed and unmapped. Some day, perhaps, when its conceptions have percolated to the minds of nine out of every ten men in the street, there will be short and simple equivalents for "Unconscious," "complex," *"libido,"* "sublimation," and the rest; but at the pres-

ent stage psychology can hardly be blamed for preferring a terminology which is at any rate as accurate as our present knowledge enables us to make it.

It is possible that, having read two chapters out of eight without coming across any direct reference to religion, some readers may at this point be getting a little impatient! I can only beg them to bear with me a little longer. I am concerned in this volume with the bearings of modern psychology on religious faith and practice: only, that is to say, with either psychology or religion where and in so far as their territories, so to speak, touch or overlap—and indeed only with some of the points where this happens. It seems wiser, on the whole, to assume that the majority of readers will be more familiar with the conceptions of religion than with those of recent psychology: and this makes it imperative that I should begin by giving as clear an idea as may be of what, in broad outline, the chief conceptions of current psychology *are*. This is what, in these two chapters, I have been trying to do. There is still much description and exposition to be done, but from this point onwards such description will be from time to time interrupted by explicit discussion as to the relationship of psychology and religion.

Chapter III

PSYCHOANALYSIS AND SIN

I TAKE some credit to myself that I have so far only used the word "psychoanalysis" once! But I must now remind the reader that a great deal of this new knowledge of the nature and functions of the mind has been evolved as the result of a particular technique found to be extraordinarily successful in treating certain forms of mental disease; and we must, therefore, devote some attention to this technique, which is what the word psychoanalysis properly stands for—though it has come to be used, also, in a looser sense, for the whole body of doctrine based on the results of this method.

Freud was not the first investigator to observe that certain pathological mental states—in particular, some forms of hysteria—came to an abrupt conclusion with the recall to the patient's memory of an entirely forgotten incident of childhood. Nevertheless, the supreme importance of this discovery was more quickly appreciated by him than by any one else: he has been the pioneer in the work based on it: and with his name the ideas of psychoanalysis must be always primarily associated.

Briefly, the psychoanalytic method aims first of all at bringing to the surface of the mind as much of the contents of the Unconscious as possible, at opening up *amnesiæ*, unearthing repressions, and recalling infan-

tile and childish memories to consciousness. It substitutes, in the mind of the subject, what is conscious for what is unconscious. With this end in view, the subject is invited to allow his ideas to have absolutely free play, and to utter aloud every single thing that comes into his head during the hour or so that each instalment, so to speak, of the treatment—which may go on every day for many months—lasts. He is to reject *nothing* which occurs to him, however trivial, irrelevant, personal, intimate, or immodest it may seem. He relates his dreams. Sometimes—though one gathers that this procedure is seldom used by present-day analysts—lists of words are read out to him and he is invited to respond with the first word or idea with which the stimulus-word is associated in his mind: the time-reaction of each response being recorded by the analyst with the help of a stop-watch.

The result of this procedure is that in course of time, which may be comparatively short or exceedingly long, immense tracts of the subject's mind are brought to consciousness—to *his own* consciousness—of which hitherto he has been either entirely ignorant or only very vaguely aware. But as the analysis progresses, it becomes evident, from the patient's hesitations, confusions, and silences, that a strong resistance is being set up against the expression of certain ideas. When this occurs, it is the duty of the analyst to point out the fact, to make the patient himself realise that he is concealing something, and to help him to overcome the resistance. If this is accomplished, there sooner or later emerges from the deeps of his mind, if the analysis is successful, a complex (or complexes) which has been "repressed" in the technical sense already defined and discussed, and with it the forgotten

incident or experience which originally led to its repression.

The contents of the Unconscious having now become conscious, the repressions having been brought to light, the infantile *amnesiæ* filled in, the patient is encouraged to face the situation. In particular, he must recognise the faulty attachments of *libido* thus revealed. His condition may be described either as a dam or check in the flow of *libido,* or as the diversion of *libido* into injurious, unhealthy, and a-social channels, or as a combination of both: in any case, the result appears as an inadequate adaptation of the whole personality to the real world. He must, then, recognise all this; and he must, further, make up his mind to the fact that his future salvation depends on the redirection, the sublimation of *libido* from its former channels into new and healthy ones. What these new channels are to be he must himself decide, and, since the direction of *libido*-flow is primarily determined by environment—using the word in its widest possible sense, as including outside influences material, intellectual, and social—he must so arrange his life henceforward as to give himself the best chance. This process of sublimation, which is the ultimate aim and object of every analysis, while it begins during the treatment itself, is likely to continue, of course, long after the treatment is over.

In this summary description of the analytic procedure I have been obliged to omit some features. But three points require particular emphasis.

In the first place, the whole process is emotional, not intellectual. In the course of an analysis, the patient may go through the whole gamut of his emotions: and, so far from trying to check this, the

analyst encourages it. When, for instance, a repressed complex is brought to the surface, the patient, if he is fully to appreciate its significance, must not merely recognise it, but actually feel it, experience it, live through again, as it were, the circumstances and the emotions which were the original cause of its repression. (There is a further important emotional feature of the process, concerned with the relations of the patient to the analyst, to which I shall return later.)

The second thing to notice is this. One result of the use of the psychoanalytic method has been the discovery that in the workings of the normal as well as of the abnormal mind the impulses broadly designated as "sexual" play a very much greater part than has hitherto been acknowledged or even recognised.

As a consequence of this—well-advertised!—discovery, one frequently comes across two common attitudes to the newer school of psychology of which it is difficult to say whether one or the other is the more regrettable. I mean, on the one hand, the attitude of sheer ridicule, and, on the other, that which refuses to attach any real importance to psychoanalysis on the ground of its "needless" preoccupation with the subject of sex. Together, these attitudes create what one cannot help thinking a most unfortunate atmosphere for the infancy of a new science.

Now, we must insist, I think—though the insistence will certainly be put down to a repressed complex of our own!—that on this question of sex the extreme Freudian school has simply run, and is running, amuck. What is their position? It is that all human conduct, all human ideas, philosophies, religions, ideals, are the product of unconscious sexuality: that the first manifestations of the sexual impulse are to be detected in

the baby sucking at its mother's breast or finding satisfaction in exploring the creases and dimples of its own body: that sexual perversions—autoerotism, homosexuality, lesbianism, sadism, and other horrors —can only be understood as regressions to the sexuality of childhood: that the first object of sex-love in every individual is the parent of the opposite sex: and that the infant's sexual life is the permanent basis of all later development. I cannot examine this position here: it must suffice to say that it is rejected, or qualified, by every psychologist who has not fallen a complete victim to the blandishments of the Mother Church—in Vienna—of the psychoanalytic movement. We may notice, for example, the important testimony of Dr. W. H. Rivers, who, after a large and varied experience of the neuroses of war—all of which, to the pure Freudian, are essentially sexual in their ultimate origin—wrote that

"in my own experience, cases arising out of the war which illustrate the Freudian theory of sexuality directly and obviously have been few and far between. Since the army (during the war period) would seem to be fairly representative of the whole male population of the country, this failure to discover to any great extent the cases with which the literature of the Freudian school abounds might well be regarded as significant. . . . While we have over and over again abundant evidence that pathological nervous and mental states are due, it would seem directly, to the strains and shocks of warfare, there is, in my experience, singularly little evidence to show that, even indirectly and as a subsidiary factor, any part has been taken in the process of causation by conflicts arising out of the activity of suppressed sexual complexes." [1]

[1] *Instinct and The Unconscious*, p. 164. For a trenchant criticism of the Freudian theories of sexuality see McDougall's *Introduction to Social Psychology* (fourteenth edition), pp. 395 ff.

For myself, I cannot help suspecting that the particular obsession which we are discussing may be sometimes due to a sheer refusal to recognise any other factors *but* sexual ones in the neuroses; and, further, to the probability that a patient who knows something of the doctrines of psychoanalysis, who *expects*, therefore to find his own Unconscious predominantly sexual and obscene, may unwittingly furnish just that kind of material, in the shape of memories and associations, which the extreme Freudian analyst would be amazed and disappointed if he did not get.

Nevertheless, when we have said all this, there remains the unquestionable fact that, if the observations and conclusions of analysts are to be allowed any weight at all, large numbers of mental derangements are due to the morbid workings of the sex instinct. And so it has come about that the subject of psychoanalysis provokes uproarious mirth in those who know nothing about it beyond what they have heard in the gossip of the clubs, in those whose superficial acquaintance with it is derived from the extreme school just referred to, and in those in whose minds the mere thought of sex is inevitably associated with indecent jokes.

There remains, however, a class of persons whose objection to the subject on the grounds of its "unhealthy" emphasis on sex is perfectly honest: and to these people there are, I think, two things to be said. In the first place, psychoanalytic studies are directed towards the investigation of the nature and contents of the human mind. If it appears, as a result of such inquiries, that the sexual impulse *is* of greater importance and influence than has hitherto been suspected, then, we are faced with an immensely important

fact, of such a kind that we have no sort of right to ignore it. It is no part of any one's duty to delay the progress of Truth. In the second place, there is surely some confusion of thought involved in a good deal of this talk about "morbidity" and "unhealthiness." A visitor in my house once took down from my study shelves one of Freud's big volumes, and came to me afterwards in horrified denunciation of what his eye had happened to light upon at the page he turned. But if he had been staying with a doctor he might have chanced upon an illustrated surgical treatise, and his criticism of that as "disgusting" and "abominable" would have been as ridiculous as his criticism of a text-book of psychoanalysis. The point is—and it is worth some emphasis—that text-books of psychoanalysis are written, in a scientific spirit, for those who—whether as doctors, or clergy, or educationalists—regard it as their duty to acquaint themselves with the details and conclusions of current psychological research. They are not written for the general lay public. The charge of pornography, when levelled against them, is about as intelligent as it would be if levelled against medical treatises. There will always be nasty-minded people who will pore over them from perverted motives, just as they pore over medical books and certain parts of the Bible and of Chaucer and Shakespeare. That cannot be helped. What the average educated man is concerned with is the general results of psychoanalytic research, and for this purpose there are several excellent books, written by competent authorities, at his disposal: it is not in the least necessary that he should have recourse to technical works written for students.

The third feature of analysis to which I wish to call attention at this stage is a negative one. We have

seen that the ultimate aim of every analysis is the sublimation of *libido* set free by the bringing to consciousness of a repressed complex: and in describing the analytic procedure just now I was at some pains to point out that this work of sublimation belongs to the patient himself; it is not the work of the analyst. The position of the latter is throughout a passive one: if he knows his business, he will aim at making the patient realise and exercise his own responsibility. "The patient is to be given," says Dr. David Forsyth,

> "the same freedom and independence in choosing the manner and extent of his sublimations as is urged upon him by psychoanalysis in all his decisions. To advise, except in general terms, and, still worse, to press suggestions, is no part of the analyst's function; if this position is departed from, unsuccessful experiments and disappointment on both sides will result." [2]

Now, this seems quite unequivocal, and it would seem that the character of the analyst, and his personal opinions as to what constitute healthy channels for *libido* and what do not, would seem to be negligible factors. Nevertheless, the matter is not quite so simple as that. The analyst and his patient, on any showing, get to be on extremely intimate terms: it is surely beyond question that the latter must in the course of the analysis become very susceptible to what may be called the "spiritual atmosphere" of his physician.[3] Add to this the fact that the process of sublimation, while it must continue long after the analysis is over, must commence soon after it has begun, and we can hardly be said to be looking for a mare's-nest when we insist on the dangers of what may be called "non-

[2] *The Technique of Psychoanalysis*, p. 128.
[3] *Cp.* on Transference, p. 50.

moral" sublimation. There is an obvious possibility of sheer moral chaos. Sublimation *may* be in any direction: what is needed is some commonly accepted standard as to the channels along which *libido,* liberated from its former course, *ought* to be given the opportunity to flow. Sublimation, apart from reference to an authoritative standard of moral values, may conceivably be a dangerous thing.

We touch here, clearly, upon a matter in which Christianity is directly concerned. It is clear that such a standard as that referred to is provided by the Christian ethic and the Christian atmosphere. It would, however, be idle to pretend that these are in much evidence in psychoanalytic circles—certainly they are not among the advanced school. It is important not to exaggerate, and it should be remembered that the more complete and successful the analysis and the more competent the analyst, the less opportunity will there be for any but self-chosen sublimation. Nevertheless, I think we are faced here with a real difficulty, though there are, of course, some competent analysts who are also believing Christians; a difficulty probably unsurmountable until a school of analysis arises which avowedly approaches the whole problem of ethics and sublimation from the point of view of revealed religion. The obvious solution of the practical difficulty which may arise when choosing an analyst is to make very careful inquiries beforehand. A friend of mine—a convinced and practising Catholic—who recently underwent a lengthy course of treatment from a well-known analyst, told me that he warned her at the outset that his religious and ethical position was totally different from hers, and that she must bear that in mind when the question of sublimation arose. When it did in fact

arise, he suggested a certain course of conduct which would directly have violated her moral principles, but accompanied the suggestion with a reminder of what he had said before the treatment began, and urged her to thrash the matter out thoroughly in her own mind before coming to a decision. Such candour is entirely praiseworthy, and goes to show that the difficulty we are discussing, *real as it in some cases undoubtedly is,* may be exaggerated. We may remember, further, that, after all, what every analyst cares for most is the cure of his patient, and that—as the quotation from Dr. David Forsyth on a previous page insists—nothing is more likely to retard or prevent a cure than the attempt to drive the patient in a direction to which the best part of his nature is opposed. Some authorities, indeed, would put it more strongly than this, and say that it simply cannot be done: that the point now under discussion is not a mountain at all, but the merest molehill: and that to treat it as a mountain is on a par with the vulgar objection to hypnotic treatment on the ground that it may, if the moral standard of the hypnotist be lower than that of his subject, put the latter "in his power"—a delusion for which there is little or no basis in fact, it being impossible to induce a person under hypnosis to do anything against which his waking moral judgment would revolt.

Of one thing we may be certain: the higher and more stable a patient's moral principles and character, the less this possible danger in psychoanalysis.

On the other hand, lest I should be thought altogether to deny the danger—which is the cause of great searching of conscience to many people—let me say

that I have it on the authority of one who knows a certain famous analyst intimately, that, of three priests whom the latter has had as patients in the course of his career, the line of sublimation chosen by two of them involved renouncing their sacred Orders. And on the general question, the following remarks of the *fons et origo* of psychoanalysis seem strictly relevant: they are taken from Freud's recently published *Introductory Lectures:*—

"You must not be led away by my eagerness to defend myself against the accusation that in analytic treatment neurotics are encouraged to 'live a free life,' and conclude from it that we influence them in favour of conventional morality. That is at least as far removed from our purpose as the other. We are not reformers, it is true; we are merely observers; but we cannot avoid observing with critical eyes, and we have found it impossible to give our support to conventional sexual morality, or to approve highly of the means by which society attempts to arrange the practical problems of sexuality in life. We can demonstrate with ease that what the world calls its code of morals demands more sacrifices than it is worth, and that its behaviour is neither dictated by honesty nor instituted with wisdom. We do not absolve our patients from listening to these criticisms; we accustom them to an unprejudiced consideration of sexual matters like all other matters; and if after they have become independent by the effect of the treatment they choose some intermediate course between unrestrained sexual license and unconditional asceticism, our conscience is not burdened, whatever the outcome. We say to ourselves that anyone who has successfully undergone the training of learning and recognising the truth about himself is henceforth strengthened against the dangers of immorality, even if his standard of morality should in some respect differ from the common one." [4]

[4] Page 362.

It was perhaps inevitable, when once the main features of psychoanalysis became generally known, that the superficial parallel between the procedure of the analyst in the consulting-room and that of the priest in the confessional should be greatly exaggerated. On the basis of this *prima facie* similarity, a number of theological writers, both Roman and Anglican, have erected a new defence of the Catholic system of confession. Here, they say, we have the age-long wisdom of the Church vindicated by the most modern psychological science.

It is true that, as we shall see, psychoanalysis does support certain aspects of Christian teaching about sin and the wise way of dealing with it. But there can be no doubt that the resemblances between psychoanalysis and confession have been greatly exaggerated, and it seems highly important that this should be generally realised. Let me briefly summarise the *divergences* between psychoanalysis and confession: it will be seen that they are so considerable as almost to cancel the affinities.

First: the complex with which an analyst is dealing is seated in the Unconscious: it is repressed. That is to say, it is unknown to the patient's ordinary waking consciousness, and can only be discovered (so far as our present knowledge goes) by the technical methods of analysis. Now, in hearing confessions, it is clear that a priest is never dealing—nor is the penitent—with a repressed complex in this technical sense; for, by definition, a complex that is repressed cannot be confessed. I can no more confess my "repressed" sins that I can confess the sins of some one else, and he a person of whose existence I never heard. The sins I confess may be the result of a repressed complex:

but I cannot confess the complex, since I am not conscious of it, and can only gain consciousness of it by the psychoanalytic method.

Secondly: in the vast majority of cases, one analysis either cures or—doesn't. (There are certain types of neurosis for which the treatment can do nothing: we are not concerned with these here.) The analyst has no sympathy with the Catholic encouragement of repeated, much less frequent, confessions. He insists that this frustrates the soul's autonomy, the only worthy goal of therapist or parson.

Thirdly: there is no real parallel between a wise confessor's direction and the sublimation which we have seen to be the analyst's ultimate objective. The process of sublimation is in its essence unconscious: *libido* cannot be forced into a given channel by an effort of the conscious will: its direction is primarily determined by external environment.

Fourthly: the final aim and object of making a confession is to obtain absolution—in theological language, the pardon of sin by the application of the cleansing Blood of Christ to the soul. The priest's direction may indeed be of great value, but it is not essential to the integrity of the sacrament that he should give any direction at all. The essential feature is "supernatural," or it is nothing. No doubt it is true that the mere act of confession is good for the penitent's soul, and that he seeks strength for the future as well as a cancellation of the guilt of the past. But this strength he believes to be derived wholly from "outside"—from God, not from anything in himself or the priest. With such ideas as these, though they are the *raison d'être* of Confession, it is obvious that an analyst has nothing to do. He is concerned, not

with sin, but with mental disease: and the possibility of "forgiveness"—or the need of forgiveness, or the value and desirability of forgiveness—he does not even take into account.

Fifthly: the analyst relies to a great extent throughout on a certain peculiar attitude which the patient, in every case, adopts towards him. I have already alluded to this factor. When the analysis has proceeded a little way, it is found that the patient either openly displays, or manifests in indirect ways which the analyst, from his experience, can quickly recognise, more or less violently pronounced feelings for him. These may be either positive or negative: in the former case, if we are to believe Professor Freud, a young woman patient may go so far as to make open sexual advances to her physician; in the latter, the patient may betray his antagonism so far as to blame the analyst for his own neurosis, and to break off the treatment *tout court*. The significance of this feature of analysis—the technical name of which is Transference—arises from the essentially *emotional* character of the whole process. As the analysis proceeds, and long-buried memories are unearthed from the Unconscious, their emotional content is liberated too, and *transferred by the patient to the analyst,* as if the latter were responsible for stirring them. Now, too strong a transference, either positive or negative, is fatal to successful analysis, and the physician's task is to dissolve it—in particular, to make the patient understand that his emotion does not arise from the present situation, but belongs to something that happened to him long ago: nevertheless, the value attaching to this "abreaction" or working-off of repressed emotion is one of the central tenets of psychoanalysis, and it is

greatly assisted by—indeed, it can hardly happen without—a positive transference kept at a moderate level of intensity.

It is obvious, of course, that an appalling moral danger is created by this feature of transference in the hands of an unscrupulous analyst: and we should remember in this connexion that there is no reason whatever to prevent any blackguard who chooses, and who has had the wit to acquaint himself with the technique, from setting up as a practising psychoanalyst in any town in England to-day: no medical qualifications are required, no diploma, no certificate of competence.

But it was not to draw attention to this danger—quite hypothetical, so far as any analyst of repute is concerned—that I spoke of the nature of transference: but rather to indicate another difference between analysis and confession. It is clear that transference plays no part whatever—or ought to play no part—in confession, while it has a central place in every analysis.

But while it is important to clear our minds of the supposed parallels between analysis and confession, it is no less important that we should appreciate the real bearing of the new psychology on the problem of sin.

It warns us, in a word, of *the incalculable dangers of repression.* Now, it is clear that a sin deliberately faced and acknowledged before God and man in the confessional has, to say the least, far less chance of being repressed and forming a dangerously active complex in the Unconscious, than one slurred over and dismissed only half repented. Let me give what I believe to be a very important illustration. Every

priest knows only too well that there are certain solitary sins of the body to which young people, especially boys, are extraordinarily prone. On the other hand, few things are more striking, in the pathological records of psychoanalysis, than the frequency with which neuroses of various kinds are ultimately traceable to the beginning of indulgence in these habits. Shall I be accused of laxity if I suggest that in this country we have given to these sins a somewhat disproportionate place in the scale, exalting them into a kind of special bogey in a class by themselves? The result has been that they are inevitably subject to what almost amounts to wholesale repression. If we bear in mind the experience, just referred to, of the priest on the one hand and the analyst on the other, we are surely justified in pointing out the immense benefit which a far more general use, than at present prevails among young people, of auricular confession would bring to the mental and spiritual health of the whole community.

On the other hand, it is possible that the Church may learn something from the psychoanalysts' insistence on the paramount importance of the individual soul's autonomy. Is it too much to say that the value of the gradual recovery of penitential discipline in the Church of England is in some danger of being weakened by the desire in some quarters to "get people to their confessions" without much regard to the precise kind of people we get? It should be insisted, more emphatically than is generally done, that confession is more akin to medicine than to food. There are types of character which should have recourse to it seldom rather than frequently; which are on the whole weakened rather than otherwise by too much dependence on

the counsel even of the wisest director. But that this is precisely the type which makes most use of the ministry of reconciliation seems to be suggested by the comments one hears from many of those clergy with a large circle of penitents. More than one such priest has lamented to me that most of those whose confessions he hears are "not the ones who really ought to come." To put the matter quite bluntly, a certain number of clergy may need to be advised so to teach the subject of confession that they do not *only* hear the story of how, "since my last confession, I have three times omitted grace before meat, twice been late for Divine worship, and once indulged in angry thoughts about a fellow-teacher in the Sunday School."

On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that a sense of guilt in itself inevitably produces a condition of mental conflict, and disturbs our interior peace to a degree proportionate to our sense of the sinfulness of sin. The peace which comes from Absolution and the certainty that we are forgiven, and the guilt of the past removed, destroys the potentialities for harm inherent in a sense of guilt repressed into the Unconscious because of its unpleasantness. It would not surprise me to learn—though statistics on such a point are from its very nature probably unobtainable—that some cases of "religious mania" (the delusion of having committed the "unforgivable sin," for example) are found to be persons whose past spiritual life, whatever its other qualities, has not been characterised by a real acknowledgment of personal sin.

Before leaving the subject of confession, there is another thing which must be said. I am aware that I have against me the opinion of some clergy whose views are entitled to respect; but, for myself, I feel

very strongly that psychoanalysis, in the narrow sense, should be left to the psychoanalysts. Let the clergy stick to their own job. It is greatly to be hoped that as a result of their study of psychology an increasing number of priests may be able to read the surface indications of a repressed complex when they see them: such knowledge cannot fail to be invaluable in the guidance of souls: but the actual discovery of a complex, the abreaction of the emotion attaching to it, and so on, should be carried out, surely, under the superintendence of an expert who is also a qualified medical man.

Chapter IV

PSYCHOLOGY AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

THOSE readers who are familiar with the later editions of Professor McDougall's *Social Psychology*—that absolutely indispensable companion to any serious psychological study—will remember that he draws attention, in the Preface, to the fact that the conception of the complex, reached by psychologists who approach these problems from the point of view of mental pathology, is to all intents and purposes identical with his own notion—developed with great skill in the book just referred to—of the Sentiment. McDougall's definition of a Sentiment is

"an organised system of emotional dispositions centred about the idea of some object. The organisation of the sentiments in the developing mind is determined by the course of experience";[1]

and the close similarity between this definition of a Sentiment and the psychoanalytic conception of a Complex as the result of the interaction of instinct and experience may be further emphasised by McDougall's doctrine that

"the essential difference between an instinct and a sentiment" is that "in the instinct the connexion between the cognitive and the conative dispositions is innate, while in

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 159.

the sentiment this connection is acquired through individual experience." [2]

Now, further: in McDougall's view, the primary element in moral advance consists in the development of what he calls the "self-regarding sentiment," with its two principal varieties of pride and self-respect—both of them evolving, it is to be noted, like self-consciousness itself, through contact with the individual's social environment. Finally, in any strong character there must be "the predominance of some one sentiment which in all circumstances is capable of supplying a dominant motive"; and, since only the self-regarding sentiment is capable of becoming such a master-sentiment, it follows that

> "for the generation of moral character in the fullest sense, the strong self-regarding sentiment must be combined with one for some ideal of conduct, and it must have risen above dependence on the regards of the mass of men; and the motives supplied by this master-sentiment in the service of the ideal must attain an habitual predominance." [3]

It is not very difficult, surely, to translate all this into the language of Christian ethics? The sentiments develop with experience, through contact with environment. *How* it is, indeed, that instincts, originally designed (apparently) to respond to physical *stimuli,* respond also, not only to objects and situations other than their "native" ones, but also to moral and spiritual *stimuli,* naturalistic psychology cannot explain. But to believers in the reality of a spiritual world, and above all to those who accept, even in broadest outline, the Christian philosophy of things, a human being's

[2] *Ibid.,* Preface. [3] *Ibid.,* p. 261.

spiritual environment is as real as, and certainly more important than, the material. The application of this is so obvious as hardly to require development in a small volume designed to cover a good deal of ground. It is clear that all of us can to a large extent choose our experience. The friends we make, the books we read, the amusements and recreations we follow, the profession we adopt, these and much more are largely under our conscious control, and they form a large part of our experience. It is clear, again, that the religious atmosphere in which we live—or may live—is "experience" too, an experience open to all who will share it: what shall a Catholic say, then, of the atmosphere of the Church, the companionship of Christ, and the Communion of Saints?

It would be difficult, for instance, to exaggerate the support which modern psychology lends—quite unwittingly, of course—to a really dynamic belief in the Communion of Saints. We are continually having drilled into us the incalculable inportance of environment, and especially of our social environment. We are told, by implication, that if we want to be "good," to become what we desire to become, while yet we only half desire it; if we want to reinforce, as it were, that side of our nature which does desire goodness; our only hope lies—not in "strengthening our wills," as we call it, which is precisely (as S. Paul knew) what we *can't do,* but—in deliberately placing ourselves in, and identifying ourselves with, the kind of society which displays naturally and instinctively the character and the qualities which we would fain were ours. But if this is true, if our most urgent need is a community of righteous souls, a surrounding atmosphere of holiness, who shall measure the power

and the influence, did we only realise it and submit to it, of the "cloud of witnesses" wherewith we are encompassed?

Or, again—if for a moment we use the word "complex" for a *healthy* "system of emotions centring round an object" [4]—what does S. Paul's great utterance, "To me, to live is Christ" mean, if not that he was mastered by a "Christ-complex"? That all men should be so mastered is the aim of the Christian religion.

These lines of reflection may be supplemented. It will be remembered that the sublimation of *libido*—that cosmic force or energy which is the driving power behind all animate life—is an unconscious process. Now, according to Christianity, if man is to achieve God's destiny for him, this *libido* which he shares with the rest of the animal world must and may be reinforced by a special contact between his personality and his Creator's; in other words, by *grace*. We have, then, something like this formula:—

Libido : sublimation : : Grace : x.

Clearly, x here is the operation of the indwelling Spirit of God. And if the psychologist, as is probable enough, would not accept the "parallel" quite in this form, that would be because he felt (quite legitimately, from his point of view) that it introduces factors with which he has no scientific means of dealing, not because it contradicts any of his principles (it goes, of course—he would say, unwarrantably—beyond them: it transcends them: but it does not question, or deny, or contradict them). We may observe, further, that

[4] Strictly speaking, the word "complex" should be reserved for *morbid* emotional systems: it would therefore be more accurate to speak of a "Christ-sentiment"—more accurate, but less arresting!

the presence (Indwelling) and work (Sanctification) of God the Holy Spirit in the human soul is, normally at least, "unconscious," in the sense of not being recognisable by the immediate evidences of the senses.

It is tempting, for our present purpose, to take for granted the existence of a "religious instinct" in man. But if we did so without argument we should be running counter to the general trend of current psychological opinion. It is generally held that religion is too varied and complex a phenomenon to be regarded as an inherited tendency to behave and to feel in a specific and characteristic fashion upon the perception of a specific stimulus. The principle of Occam's razor [5] is also against making another addition, unless it is absolutely necessary, to the "innate psychophysical dispositions" with which man enters upon life endowed: while it is obvious that a psychologist who is also a thoroughgoing evolutionist and believes in the evolution of man from animal forms, is bound to seek the *origin* of religious impulses and emotions in instincts which man shares with the other animals. Most modern writers, therefore, would prefer to speak of the religious *sentiment* rather than the religious *instinct,* and we may regard as fairly typical McDougall's view of religion as a compound of wonder, "negative self-feeling," fear, tender emotion and curiosity.

Nevertheless, it is permissible to point out that this position seems to involve an assumption not a wit more justifiable than that of a religious instinct. According to McDougall, the religion of primitive man was animistic, and was the result of his *reflection*—mark that word—upon the forces of nature. Professor J. B. Pratt writes:—

[5] *Entia non multiplicanda praeter necessitatem.*

"There is, then, no specific 'religious instinct.' Yet there is a real truth behind the phrase. None of man's religious acts and feelings are instinctive in the sense in which anger and love are; and yet we may say that, given a being *endowed with intelligence* and with the dozen or more specific instincts and tendencies of man, such a being is bound to be religious, at least potentially or incipiently." [6]

I have italicised what seem to me the significant words in this passage. Is intelligence, then, an instinct? No evolutionary psychologist would say so. Yet the attempt to describe the path by which the rational faculty of man—the power of arguing from premises to conclusion—has been evolved from the mental processes of animals must surely be held to be, as yet, completely unconvincing. There is a gap here which has not been filled in: a gap quite as great as that between the lowliest form of life and inorganic matter. Now, I am well aware of the danger attaching to the theological tendency to build on the gaps in the scientific account of things. But if it is ever justified, it is surely justified here. I cannot see that a Christian thinker has any alternative than to insist that man represents in some real sense a new order of being: that in him the Creator has implanted factors which differentiate him once and for all from the highest types of merely animal life, and that the faculty of self-conscious reasoning is one of these factors. But if we part company—as I submit we are bound to do—with the consistent evolutionist on this point, the main reason for refusing to regard the religious impulse as part of the innate endowment of man would appear to lose much of its force. The positive grounds, more-

[6] *The Religious Consciousness*, p. 71.

over, for so regarding it are considerable. In particular, if we define it in the widest possible way, as the consciousness of the existence of higher powers with which man is or may be connected—a consciousness invariably expressed in the two practices of prayer and sacrifice—religion is universal: wherever man exists, it exists.

I suggest, therefore, that we may continue to speak with some confidence of the "religious instinct." [7] If that is so, an immense field is opened up at once for those who are anxious to understand the bearing of psychological principles on the problems of the religious life. One or two points in which this field seems most promising may be suggested.

We have seen that the development of personality and character consists in the creation of "sentiments" formed by the impact of experience and environment upon the instinctive forces of the mind. Now, it has been pointed out [8] that if we consider those species in the animal world which have attained the highest places in the course of evolution, they may be divided into two classes. There are on the one hand those whom Nature has provided with a large number of instincts, and these of a highly specialised character, so that in this type of animal there is in the course of a

[7] I should not wish to over-emphasise this point. In previous pages a line of argument has been suggested which is based upon the conception of religion as a "sentiment" to be built up by intelligent adaptation to environment: and it may perhaps be felt that the argument now to be outlined is no more than a variant of this, as well as being dependent on a much-questioned view of religion as instinctive. In a sense, that is true; but the argument that follows is more suited to appeal to the average man, who certainly regards religion as an "instinct": and I believe there is at any rate more to be said for his view than the learned in these matters are always disposed to allow.

[8] *Cp.* McDougall's *Psychology* (Home University Library), p. 165.

lifetime hardly any need or opportunity for modifications of behaviour through experience. On the other hand, there are those animals endowed with comparatively few instincts, and these of a general character. The best examples of the first type are certain of the higher insects; for instance, the bee and the ant: of the second class, of course, Man himself. The progress of this second class depends entirely on the extent to which the animal gradually modifies its instinctive reactions in relation to its gradually increasing experience of the external world. The progress of man—his formation of strong and lasting "sentiments"—depends on the extent to which he uses his native intelligence to educate his instincts. And if he doesn't educate them? The energy belonging to them cannot be destroyed—the indestructibility of psychic material is a psychological postulate—and if the instincts are not trained and disciplined and educated along right lines, the lines (as a Christian would say) which God has laid down for them, they get cogged; or, to change the metaphor, they become corrupted. Thus, there is evidence that certain types of insanity are due to the inadequate sublimation of the gregarious instinct: while students of psychology are only too well aware of the results of the misdirection or aberration of the instinct of sex.

All this is true, *mutatis mutandis,* of man's instinct for God. It must be trained and nurtured and educated. And if it isn't? Then similar results follow here as in the case of the other instincts. It is true, even, that the religious instinct may be perverted and corrupted: witness, again, many asylum patients. It may be *repressed:* one sometimes wonders whether it is merely fanciful to suggest that the real trouble

with modern Europe is that it is suffering from a repressed "religion-complex," revealing its existence in many of the less pleasant features of modern life, but destined one day to explode in manifestations even more obviously dangerous and pathological. However this may be, it is clear than an immense responsibility lies upon those who in any degree are charged with the spiritual education of others, whilst every individual who is trying to make his own religion a real and vital thing may find a spur to spiritual advance in such conceptions as we have been considering. How many people, for example, are content to allow their interior life to remain at an almost static level; or to confine their prayers to petition, with little or no practice of that "mental prayer" without which in some form or another, if we are to believe the saints, the "experts" in holiness, real spiritual progress is not merely difficult but impossible; or to find satisfaction for the emotional side of their religion in the singing of hymns the tone of which is perilously akin to spiritual infantilism! Rather should we remember, as has been well said by a recent writer, that

> "the religious impulses, taken alone, no more represent the full range of man's spiritual possibilities than the life of the hunting tribe or the African kraal represent his full social possibilities." [9]

The reader is now in a position, perhaps, to answer for himself the question so often asked by people whose knowledge of psychoanalytic theory and practice is only vague and second-hand: How far is the whole thing compatible with Christian faith?

[9] Evelyn Underhill, *The Life of the Spirit and the Life of To-day*, p. 79.

We may perhaps summarise our conclusions up to this point by saying that, in regard to the conceptions so far discussed, there appears to be no necessary and irreconcilable conflict between Christianity and current psychology; while in more ways than one those concerned with the development of the spiritual life may learn something from these inquiries into the human *psyche* and its amazingly subtle and complex modes of behaviour.

But we must at the same time go further, and point out that, though both psychology and religion are concerned with man's spiritual nature, neither their methods of approach nor the aims they have in view are—or indeed ought to be—the same.

Christianity is a supernatural way of life, or it is nothing. What God offers to the human race in and through Jesus Christ is not, primarily, a moral code, nor a series of philosophical propositions, nor a system of philanthropy, but the opportunity of living at another and higher level than the "natural." *Lay hold on eternal life* is one of those texts of Scripture in which the essence of Christianity may be said to be embodied. We too often forget that the purpose of the Incarnation of God was threefold: first, to give to man a perfect pattern of conduct; secondly, to make atonement (in whatever sense we interpret that phrase) for the sins of the race; *and thirdly,* to make available, for all men who will accept it, a power, a force, an energy which shall make them capable—as, without it, they are incapable—of copying Christ's pattern of conduct and of translating into their own personal experience the virtue and the merits of His atoning death.

This power is the "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." There is nothing mechanical or magical about it. It

is a personal relationship; a personal contact and communion between the human soul and the living Christ. "As the Father hath life in Himself," our Lord said on one occasion, "so hath He given the Son to have life in Himself": and it is a doctrine fundamental to any orthodox form of Christianity that this divine life, this "super-nature" which from all eternity Christ shares with the Father, and which is the essential principle of the Godhead itself, may be shared by mortal men and women here and now. The powers and capacities of our nature as human beings may be strengthened and reinforced—indeed, must be so reinforced if we are to achieve God's destiny for us—by this personal contact between ourselves and Him.

With such conceptions as these psychology, as such, has not, and cannot have, any direct concern whatever. But they are the very heart of any true and vital Christianity; and no Christian thinker can for a moment acquiesce in the claim, sometimes made, that within an appreciable time psychology will have taken over entire the functions of religion. He cannot, for example, allow to pass without protest the claim implied by Dr. Beatrice Hinckle, in her Introduction to C. J. Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious,* that psychoanalysis is destined henceforth to render to the soul the same service which it has hitherto received from religion.

Psychoanalysis is a young child of science, and, like all children, is apt to be somewhat impatient with its elders. But after all Christianity *is* its elder, and has been grappling with the problems of the human soul for some twenty centuries—not, we may perhaps say, without some measure of success. The aim and object of psychoanalysis is sublimation of *libido.* In

this task it relies mainly on the inherent "drive" and adaptability of *libido* itself. Even so, it has already accomplished much in the sphere of mental pathology; who shall set limits to what it may some day achieve, not in abnormal cases only, but in the lives of ordinary men and women, hand in hand with Christian faith, recognising that *libido* may in man be reinforced by the Grace of God?

Chapter V

HERD INSTINCT

MORE than one reference has been made to the subject of "herd instinct," and it plays such an important part in current psychological thought and literature, and its bearing on our own object in these chapters is so great, that some attention must now be given to it.

Man is a social animal. But the impulse which drives him to live in communities, the *gregarious instinct,* is to be carefully distinguished from *herd instinct.* The existence of gregariousness in man may be assumed to date from the time when his last pre-human ancestors forsook life in the tops of trees for life in the plains: it is easy to see the advantages, for purposes of hunting and self-protection, in the formation of packs or groups. But this is not herd instinct, which in point of time is later than the gregarious instinct, being in fact a product of it. It is defined by the British sociologist who more than any other writer has insisted upon its importance, Mr. W. Trotter, as *"specific sensitiveness to the voice of the herd."* [1]

It is probably a shock to any man to be told that the greater part, not only of his conduct but of his mental make-up generally, is the result, not, as he is pleased to think, of his powers of judgment and discrimination, but of his inevitable acceptance—in-

[1] *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War.*

evitable, because instinctive—of the judgments, standards, and opinions of the community to which he belongs.

But if we take the trouble to reflect for a moment, we can judge the truth of the matter by a comparison between the degrees of tenacity with which we hold opinions based, on the one hand, upon rational and intellectual processes, and on the other hand upon suggestions derived from our social environment. Compare, for example, the resistance evoked in our minds by the contention that the earth is flat, with that produced by the assertion that it is not caddish to strike a woman. Yet the first proposition (though as far as the ordinary man is concerned, of course, it is accepted on authority and without argument) is capable of rational proof: the second is a judgment of civilised society. We are more zealous, that is to say, for "certitude" than for knowledge.

"In matters that really interest him, man cannot support the suspense of judgment which science has so often to enjoin. He is too anxious to feel certain to have time to know." [2]

The enormous strength of herd instinct, and the difficulty of resisting it, may, indeed, be easily gauged. I remember, during the war, hearing from a friend of mine who had occasion to revisit Oxford for a few days. He remarked how refreshing it was to be, if only for a short time, in an atmosphere in which it still seemed possible to think like a Christian. I knew what he meant. Who did not feel, in those days, the appalling difficulty of such thinking on nearly all questions arising out of the war: the legitimacy of war, the

[2] *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*, p. 35.

Christian attitude to enemies, the ethics of conscription, and so on? The more we tried to collect our thoughts, to get clear about our convictions, the greater seemed the irresistible "pull" of our environment—that of a pagan nation flushed with the spirit of war.

It has been the experience of many members of the Church of England to discover that the demand for—or the tolerance of—full Catholic faith, practice, discipline and ceremonial among English people is not so evident as enthusiastic ecclesiastical journalists, or "spiky" curates working among eclectic congregations, would have us suppose. But it would be an entire mistake to attribute the opposition to these things to deliberate blindness or wilful, reasoned dislike. What makes it so strong is, rather, the fact that it is instinctive—the instinct of the Protestant herd. The people of this country *won't have Popery!*—and it is because many of the doctrines and the practices to which I refer are common to Anglican *and Roman* Catholics alike that their propagation makes but slow headway among certain great sections of English people.

It will be observed that judgments of the kind we are considering possess two invariable features—a non-rational origin, and a peculiar emotional quality, very difficult to define, which makes them seem startlingly obvious and self-evident to the person who holds them, and their denial, in his eyes, the result either of wilful blindness or sheer stupidity. William James portrayed this second characteristic with delicate skill in a famous passage, though he was not speaking directly of herd instinct:—

"Not one man in a billion, when taking his dinner, ever thinks of utility. He eats because the food tastes good

and makes him want more. If you ask him *why* he should want to eat more of what tastes like that, instead of revering you as a philosopher he will probably laugh at you for a fool. The connexion between the savoury sensation and the act it awakens is for him absolute and *selbstverständlich,* an *a priori* synthesis of the most perfect sort, needing no proof but its own evidence. . . . To the metaphysician alone can such questions occur as: Why do we smile when pleased, and not scowl? Why are we unable to talk to a crowd as we talk to a single friend? Why does a particular maiden turn our wits so upside down? The common man can only say, "*Of course* we smile, *of course* our heart palpitates at the sight of a crowd, *of course* we love the maiden, that beautiful soul clad in that perfect form, so palpably and flagrantly made from all eternity to be loved!" And so, probably, does each animal feel about the particular things it tends to do in presence of particular objects. . . . To the broody hen the notion would probably seem monstrous that there should be a creature in the world to whom a nestful of eggs was not the utterly fascinating and precious and never-to-be-too-much-sat-upon object it is to her." [3]

Now, the truth of all this ought to be clear to any intelligent person. But it isn't! Any honest observer ought to be able to see that there is no field of human life unaffected by the mental process we are considering. And yet, not one man in a hundred will allow himself to be persuaded of the scope and force of herd instinct except under great pressure. This is a remarkable fact, and requires some comment.

There can be little doubt that the explanation is to be found in certain other innate tendencies of the mind. There are two in particular to which reference may be made. In the first place, it is apparently the instinctive inclination of every individual to believe, even

[3] *Principles of Psychology,* vol. ii, p. 386.

in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, that his conduct and opinions are due to the operation of his reasoning faculty, at least in a greater degree than to any other factor. But of how many of our judgments and beliefs could we truly say, after honest self-examination, that they have in fact been formulated as the result of the processes of logical reasoning?

The reason for this passion for believing that our opinions are for the most part based on our independent judgment is to be sought in a second tendency—the instinctive aversion to mental conflict, friction, or disturbance. This I have already discussed in a previous chapter, as well as the more important of the mechanisms by which a state of conflict, once aroused, is dispelled. Clearly, the instinctive reliance on our own intellectual processes, just mentioned, serves to eliminate in advance the possibility of a large number of conflicts which would otherwise be inevitable. If the mind is strongly convinced to begin with, that is to say, of the validity and importance of its own unaided accomplishments, a proportionately strong suggestion to the contrary will be required to create a conflict by arousing any doubt in the matter.

In the light of these facts it becomes easier to understand the general unwillingness to acknowledge the great part played by herd instinct in the determination of conduct. The assertion that it does play such a part serves as an irritant to two immensely strong tendencies—the tendencies to avoid interior conflict, and to believe in the rational basis of conduct.

But a further question arises: What, faced with this inevitable double complication, does the mind do? The passage already quoted from William James, provides, by implication, the answer. The mind proceeds

to *manufacture* "reasons" for conduct or opinions actually based on herd instinct. The technical name for this process is Rationalisation. In a previous chapter I quoted, in illustration of it, a passage from Mr. W. Trotter's book.[4] But it is easy to find examples nearer home. Let any one examine for himself the predominating elements—the sentiments and complexes—of his own personality, and he will be constrained to admit the part played by rationalisation.

There are, for instance, large numbers of people who object to the vivisection of animals. Let me suppose that I am addressing one of these people. If I ask him, Why? it is tolerably certain that the chief part of his answer will be an insistence on the futility of experiments on animals for the purpose of curing the diseases of men and women or of alleviating human pain. An investigation of the facts, he will say, is the main basis of his position, though he may allow that other considerations—sentiment, for example—have something (but only a very little) to do with it. But is it not quite certain that reason and sentiment[5] occupy, in actual fact, exactly opposite positions in his whole attitude to those which he assigns to them? It is difficult to understand how any one who really faces such indisputable facts as that Harvey's demonstration of the circulation of the blood was the direct outcome, as he himself admitted, of his experiments on living animals; or that such operations as the excision of the spleen or the removal of the kidney; the serum treatment of tetanus, diphtheria, anthrax, and hydrophobia, has alone been made possible by such experiments—it

[4] Page 22.

[5] The word is of course used here in its ordinary, not its psychological sense.

is hard to understand, I say, how any one who really faces these facts can continue to deny them. That they are denied by a fairly large number of people must be ascribed to the rationalisation of opinions which derive their real strength from sentiment and from suggestions propagated by the various anti-vivisection societies.

This example illustrates a further fact, namely, the very great strength of suggestions propagated by—and, conversely, the strong susceptibility of the individual to suggestions derived from—small, closely knit, "partial herds."

We must also notice that though herd instinct has an influence on everyday life quite unsuspected by the majority even of thoughtful people, this influence is not uniform in pressure or degree. Some types are much more susceptible than others to suggestions emanating from the herd. Mr. Trotter draws a striking contrast between two great mental types, the "stable-minded" and the "unstable-minded," characterised by their relative susceptibility to herd instinct. The stable-minded, who are the more usual type, are mostly content to "go with the crowd," and are, relatively speaking, unwilling to make or to undergo any great changes in the way of adaptation to changes of environment created by new experience. The unstable-minded, on the other hand, are those in whom herd instinct is a weaker force than the various egoistic instincts: they refuse to be bound by the opinions and standards of their fellows, and are less resistive to new ideas and new experience. Unstable-mindedness usually goes with a certain weakness of will-power and inability to persevere, a general discontent, and an inferior moral sense in spite of intel-

lectual superiority. Nevertheless, Mr. Trotter insists that

"mental stability is to be regarded as, in certain important directions, a loss; and the nature of the loss resides in a limitation of outlook, a relative intolerance to the new in thought, and a consequent narrowing of the range of facts over which satisfactory intellectual activity is possible . . . however 'normal' this type may be, it is one which falls far short of the possibilities of the human mind": [6]

and he proceeds to show the large extent to which, in modern communities, power and leadership tend to be in the hands of the stable-minded class, and the loss entailed by society's failure to profit by the peculiar gifts of the other type. The herd's usual method, of course, of dealing with the unstable-minded—at any rate when their unstable-mindedness passes a certain point—is to crucify them.

I hope the relevance of such facts as these to the problems of religion are sufficiently obvious. I am trying not to do more crossing of *t*'s and dotting of *i*'s than seems absolutely necessary.

Any student of the phenomena of herd instinct must be impressed with the incalculable importance of environment. We have already discussed that: here we need only add how strongly the conclusions then reached are reinforced by these further inquiries, and remark again that no Christian thinker can be content to let his thoughts in this connexion be limited either to personalities still in the conditions of earthly existence, or to human personalities alone, whether living or departed.

The Catholic Church exists to be, among other

[6] *Op. cit.*, p. 55.

things, an organ of herd instinct. It is clear, from the cold and critical examination of psychological facts, apart from any theological prepossessions whatever, that human progress consists in the development, in ever-widening circles, of that loyalty and devotion which man normally renders only to those "partial herds" with which he is by force of circumstance brought into most intimate relations. Education, in this purely moral sense, must be the aim of all agencies working for the progress of human society. But such education assumes a stimulus, a motive, of the most potent sort. It is difficult to imagine where any such motive is to be found save in the Christian religion. When modern writers tell us that "the instinct of human tenderness" and "herd instinct in its most universal form" are the hope of the world,[7] and that some forms, at least, of insanity are due to the repression of herd instinct,[8] the Christian psychologist must be allowed to remark, on these interesting results of scientific research, that when recommended to the mind and attention of the Christian Church as new discoveries, they amount to little more than teaching your grandmother to suck eggs; and to paraphrase these views by saying that the salvation of mankind depends on the extent to which the sentiment of love can be infused into humanity at large.

So much may be said, even though we go on to admit that Christian pastors and teachers do not always go the right way about their task. For example, it is notorious that large numbers of clergy are wholly content that the real love and devotion and enthusiasm

[7] A. G. Tansley, *The New Psychology and Its Relation to Life*, p. 267.
[8] Bernard Hart, *The Psychology of Insanity*, p. 170.

of their people shall find almost their whole expression in the relationships and activities of the parish itself. Now, that is letting the herd instinct of their flock remain at the merely instinctive level, or but little above it: while character-formation depends, as we have seen, on the right *development* of instinct. The application of this principle is endless, and not to be confined to ecclesiastical matters. The narrow patriotism which cries "My country, right or wrong": what is this but unsublimated herd instinct?—and for what miseries, since history began, is it not responsible?

On the other hand, there are those—the unstable-minded—whose susceptibility to herd instinct is below rather than at the level of the average. With them, our efforts must be directed not only to the gradual redirection of their self-centred impulses and emotions into channels—ever-widening channels—serving the interests of others, but also to making use of their peculiar endowment. The recognition of unstable-mindedness, and the proper education of the unstable-minded individual, constitute perhaps the most difficult task with which any one in a position of authority can be faced. He is the person naturally adapted—and intended—for leadership: yet this natural fitness itself may carry with it a tendency to moral unscrupulousness and a temptation to pride and lack of sympathy with others. Need I point out that the best hope for such an individual is that he should learn to dwell upon the example of our Lord Himself? In His earthly life we have the exquisitely perfect balance—if in such a connexion we may use such terms—of stable-mindedness and unstable-mindedness: on the one hand boundless love and sympathy with each single soul with whom He comes in contact;

on the other hand complete independence of the moral standard of His environment in any point in which it falls short of the standards of God. The Lamb of God . . . *and* the Good Shepherd.

In thinking of Rationalisation, we shall all do well, perhaps, to reflect on the unceasing temptation which it offers to ourselves. In some degree, it is probably inevitable: but, precisely because it is a process so closely connected with the great primary instincts, we should be continually examining our consciences to discover traces of it. In its morbidly developed forms, habitual rationalisation is indistinguishable from hypocrisy—probably the greatest temptation in a priest's life, and a real danger in everybody's: and the supreme hypocrite is the man who deceives not only his fellows but himself. That is the peril of unchecked rationalisation. And yet it is so extraordinarily difficult, sometimes, to be clear about one's motives! Take an illustration. I, an Anglican priest, engage in controversy with a Roman Catholic friend. If I am honest, I am bound to acknowledge that my unalterable conviction of the Catholicity of the Church of England, her ministry and sacraments, is very largely the result of the atmosphere created by my home, my education, my associations and general environment. But in argument, do I attach much weight to these things? I trow not!—any more than my friend does to similar considerations on his side. We both proceed on the assumption that our opinions—and the lives and careers based on them—are solely the result of our unfettered faculties of reason and criticism. We both rationalise.

It is in a priest's more intimate dealings with souls, and chiefly in hearing confessions, that he finds him-

self most evidently face to face with rationalisation. Not only in hearing confessions, however: it is, for example, very common to come across a man whose irreligion, actually based on sloth, or indifference, or neglect, or wilful sin, shelters itself behind a rationalisation of honest intellectual perplexity, or the un-Christlike lives of the clergy, or even (as in more than one case within my own experience) the alleged unhygienic practice of the common chalice at Mass.

At the other extreme, the confessor has to deal with "scrupulosity"—the revulsion from rationalisation carried, in its turn, to morbid lengths. But we are not concerned with that here. We may now go on to consider some further points arising out of man's suggestibility in general, as evidenced by his extreme sensitiveness to the voice of the herd.

Chapter VI

SUGGESTION

IT IS usual to distinguish between hetero- and autosuggestion, and though the two types shade into each other, and there can be no autosuggestion which has not first been a heterosuggestion, and a heterosuggestion is negligible which does not become an autosuggestion, the distinction is useful for purposes of discussion, and we may adopt it. I propose, then, to reserve until a little later on what I have to say about autosuggestion.

We have just been discussing herd instinct, which operates, in man, without the actual physical presence of the herd being necessary. A somewhat different kind of suggestibility is that created by the physical aggregation of numbers of people—by, in short, the collection of a *crowd*.

It has been said that in a crowd "suggestion proceeds by geometrical progression," and any one who has ever been in a panic can witness to the accuracy of the statement. One man is seized with terror and passes on the contagion to another, and he to a third, and the impact of the emotion on this third man is the first man's fear *plus* the second man's—and he had already begun to get the "wind up" himself! And so on till the whole crowd is infected. It is this highly inflammable nature of crowds which is played upon with such skill by the competent orator, and most of us, at

some time or other in our lives, have allowed ourselves to be swayed, not, as we thought, by the argument and persuasiveness of some impassioned public speaker, but by his skilful working upon the suggestible character of a crowd. There are some amazing, but well-attested illustrations of this phenomenon. Here is one:—

"Owing to the risk of a riot between the clerical and anti-clerical parties at Remiremont, on the Vosges, in 1907, the civic authorities thought it necessary to prohibit a specially important religious procession in honour of the Madonna. A few days later occurred a fall of large oval hailstones, in which more than 100 devout Catholics, men, women, and children, declared on oath that they had recognised images of the Madonna."[1]

In our own time and country we have had experience of what must surely be one of the most extraordinary collective hallucinations of history. In the early days of the war, who doubted that a Russian army had passed through this country *en route* for the Western front? Who did not possess *all but* first hand knowledge of the passage of those Slavonic hosts through Oxford or (save the mark!) the market-place of Wigan? I well remember meeting a lady whose name would be familiar to every reader as that of one of the most famous of our generals (he was her brother), who told me that her other brother (an admiral) had that morning heard from a fellow-officer of high rank who said he could answer for the truth of the story, since he had himself embarked the Russians at Archangel! But it seems certain that the only Russians who actually passed through England

[1] Frank Podmore, *The Newer Spiritualism;* quoting *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research,* vol. xxi, p. 405.

were a few officers on their way to be attached to the British headquarters staff!

It is clear that we have in this feature of suggestibility a factor of immense potentiality for good or evil. It is not surprising that it should be made great use of in matters of religion. Every religious revivalist depends upon it entirely, and every conductor of a Retreat to a greater degree than he always realises. When I was a first-term student in a theological college I had not shed certain Protestant prejudices with which I was blessed, and, as the Advent Retreat approached, a friend of mine (who shared them) and I made a bargain that we would not "go to Confession" during this Retreat at any rate: and that in the exceedingly unlikely event of either of us wishing to break the compact, he would tell the other so before he "went." I think it was after the third Compline address that my friend whispered to me as he passed my room on the way up to bed, "I'm going"!

But there is no occasion on which even the smallest congregation is assembled when suggestion is not at work: and it needs no emphasis to point out that a great responsibility therefore rests upon the clergy. It is a force to be used: and it can be used with immense blessing to souls. But it can also be abused.

The possibility of its abuse lies in the fact that suggestibility is most in evidence where the emotions are concerned: and, since an appeal to the feelings is likely to produce quick and visible results, a great temptation is hereby offered to the preacher or advocate. Perhaps all clergy would do well to memorise a dictum of Professor J. B. Pratt's; it may be found on page 183 of his book, *The Religious Consciousness*:—

"To appeal to the emotions on questions where only reason and evidence are really relevant is to build upon sand."

We must not exaggerate. There are few religious questions—some would say, none—in which *only* reason is relevant. But there are many subjects in which it is at least *as* relevant as emotion. Can it be denied that the temptation to leave it out is a real one: to forget that every soul includes a mind, and that no "spiritual" education which ignores the mind can be adequate or lasting? It is easy to create a pleasant, comfortable, religious-warm-bath atmosphere by a service of emotional and rather meaningless hymns, a few rhythmically monotonous prayers and a vaguely emotional appeal from the pulpit, and then to persuade ourselves that the general sense of well-being and satisfaction thereby produced is a proof of the presence of the Spirit—the Spirit, forsooth, of Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Knowledge.

It is surely significant that in the course of His earthly ministry our Lord seems deliberately to have avoided any reliance on the emotional suggestibility of groups. When one thinks of the "multitudes" which hung on His words, of the peculiarly imaginative character of the Eastern mind, of the urgent temptation which the prospect of a general acknowledgment of His Messiahship must always have offered to Him, and then reflects how perfectly He "knew what was in man," we must recognise, I think, the meaning and the lesson of His actual methods of dealing with masses of people. There was one occasion, it will be remembered, when the crowds, apparently swept off their feet by a wave of emotion not really based on any stable interior conviction, wanted to make Him

their King on the spot. *Jesus, therefore, perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force, to make Him king, withdrew again into the mountain Himself alone.*[2]

Religious "revivals" are fortunately out of fashion. And if ever we are tempted to wish for one we shall do well to turn to the literature of the subject—particularly to that dealing with what may be called the "physical phenomena" which form the almost invariable accompaniments of revivalism. "Great nervous excitement of any kind, but especially joy or fear," writes Professor Pratt, "has to overflow into the muscles," sometimes with deplorable and even revolting results. We may also recall, in this connection, Starbuck's informing statistics on the comparative permanence of "conversions" brought about during, and apart from, a revival of the more sensational kind.[3] I was talking recently to the rector of a country parish in a district where revivals are frequent and popular among nonconformists. He told me that because of their after-affects, and particularly for their invariably loosening effect upon sexual morality, he always dreads a revival within fifty miles of his village.

There is one religious adjunct, common to Christianity and to all other religions, largely dependent upon human suggestibility for its value, to which some reference must be made in the present context: I mean what is generically called "cult."

[2] S. John vi, 15.

[3] *Psychology of Religion*, p. 170. Of a particular congregation, a pastor told Professor Starbuck that out of 92 converts "received" during a revival, 62 lapsed within six weeks, while of the remaining 30 only 12 stuck to religion for any length of time. Of 68 converts "received" in the regular course of Church work, only 16 lapsed within six weeks, while of the remaining 52 there were still 41 "in good standing" long afterwards.

Under this title may be included all religiously prescribed modes of *action*. "Cult" forms an important factor—in primitive religions, a greatly preponderating factor—in every known religion, and endless illustrations might be given of it, from the crude and sometimes horrible ceremonies with which, at the age of puberty, boys of some Central Australian tribes are initiated into full membership in the tribe, to the use of the sign of the Cross, or the rigidly prescribed gestures of the Roman Catholic priest when saying Mass.

With the origin of cult we are not concerned here, though it is worth while to observe that increasing knowledge of the essentially gregarious character of primitive man has greatly strengthened the view that chronologically its rise preceded rather than followed any articulate "belief." What is important to notice, for our purpose, is that ritual and ceremonial (in the widest sense of those words), having their origin in the social character of man, and maintained from generation to generation by their irresistible appeal to the instincts of gregariousness and self-expression, are largely dependent for their influence on the factor of suggestibility which we have been considering.

The value of the Sacraments from this point of view is obvious, and it would be easy to dilate upon their suitability for the development of the religious sentiment in the mind of the average man.

It is a common objection to Catholicism that the sacramental system lends itself too easily to abuse, and to the tendency to attribute a magical, or quasi-magical, efficacy to the mere performance of rites and ceremonies; an objection generally coupled with a reference to such primitive forms of cult as I was al-

luding to just now. To a critic's mind, this argument errs in confusing origin with validity: to a Christian's it is robbed of any force by the whole philosophy of the Incarnation. The possibilities of materialistic and magical notions are, it is true, inherent in the sacramental system. This, together with the undeniable fact that in some Catholic localities there is even today a tendency for this potential danger to become actual, should make us doubly careful in our thought and teaching about the sacraments: that is all. *Corruptio optimi pessimi.* "Magic begins," as Baron von Hügel remarks,

> "only when and where things physical are taken to effect spiritual results apart altogether from minds transmitting or receiving."[4]

We may conclude this part of our subject by observing the *subjective* effect of the primarily *objective* worship of Catholic worship. It is probably true, as has often been pointed out, that the main difference between a typically Catholic service and a typically Protestant one is that whereas the direct intention of the former is the worship of God, the inevitable effect of this on the worshippers being regarded as secondary; in most forms of Protestant service the primary object is an immediate subjective effect on the congregation. The centre of Catholic worship is a tremendous spiritual Drama—something *done*: there is nothing in Protestantism, as ordinarily understood, to which the same kind of significance is attached. A Catholic church is a Temple, with a Holy of Holies to which everything else points: a Protestant church is a meeting-house, with a prayer-desk and pulpit as its dominant features.

[4] *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 251.

It is, then, all the more impressive to notice the practical unanimity with which outside observers witness to the fact I have referred to, viz. that "objective" worship indirectly, and as it were unconsciously, produces the effects at which religion of the more "subjective" type primarily aims, in addition to providing a stimulus to instincts and emotions which the ordinary man certainly possesses, but which "subjective" religion largely fails to satisfy.

I pass now to a consideration of some of the features of Autosuggestion. Certain facts already perfectly well known to psychologists have recently been brought to the attention of the general public through the remarkable achievements of the (second) Nancy school of psychotherapists, and especially of M. Emile Coué. Recent controversy has tended to revolve mainly around the philosophical aspects of the subject, and probably most students are beginning to feel that some of the theorisings to which the facts of autosuggestion have given rise among Coué's own adherents—the so-called "Law of Reversed Effort," for example—are untenable. We are not chiefly concerned here, however, with *explanations* of the facts, nor with the peculiar terminology (notably in regard to the words Will and Imagination) employed by Coué and Baudouin,[5] but with the facts themselves; and as to these there is little dispute.

The main features of Coué's system are by this time probably familiar to every one, and I will not weary the reader by describing them. But two points may be emphasised. In the first place, great importance is attached to the psychological condition in which alone effective autosuggestions can be made. To this

[5] *Suggestion and Autosuggestion:* Charles Baudouin.

condition the name Contention has been given. In the glossary at the end of Baudouin's book contention is described as "a psychological equivalent of attention, *minus* effort": it is the condition in which the mind naturally finds itself in the few moments just before going to sleep and just after waking up:—

"Our perceptions tell us nothing, or almost nothing. The mind remains inert, contemplating these dumb perceptions, failing to grasp the identity of things, for there are no associations to set it in motion along the time-worn paths. A single mental state, or it may be a small group of mental states, rises in the mental void and seems to occupy the entire field of consciousness. The mind is like a stagnant pool; *in the absence of any fresh current of images and ideas,* it tends to remain stable." [6]

The deliberate achievement of this condition, then, is the first essential.

Secondly, the mind being in this state, any auto-suggestion offered to it is most likely to be effective if it is made in the form of a short formula several times repeated, the lips actually (and indeed audibly) forming the words. All Coué's patients are instructed to repeat the famous slogan: *"Day by day, in every respect, I get better and better,"* twenty times or more on waking in the morning: this in addition to specific autosuggestions varying with different patients.

I have remarked that most of this new teaching has been familiar to psychologists long before Coué became the vogue. But the similarity between it and the advice given centuries ago by spiritual experts to those entering upon the mystical life, if less generally known, is even more striking. It would be easy to find suitable passages for quotation from any of the classical

[6] *Op. cit.*, p. 141.

mystical writers: but since S. Teresa was not only a great saint but also possessed of a genius for psychological insight, let us consider a passage from her *Way of Perfection*[7]:—

"This true orison of quiet . . . is a sort of peace in which the soul establishes herself, or rather in which God establishes the soul. All her powers are at rest. . . . It seems to her that she wants nothing more: the faculties which are at rest would like always to remain still, for the least of their movements is able to trouble or prevent her love. Those who are in this orison wish their bodies to remain motionless, for it seems to them that at the least movement they will lose this sweet peace. . . . They are in the palace close to their King, and they see that He begins to give them His kingdom. It seems to them that they are no longer in the world, and they wish neither to hear nor to see it, but only God. . . . There is this difference between the orison of quiet and that in which the whole soul is united to God; that in this last the soul has not to absorb the Divine Food, God deposits it with her, she knows not how. The orison of quiet, on the other hand, demands, it seems to me, a slight effort, but it is accompanied by so much sweetness that one hardly feels it."

This is an expert's description of the first stage in the contemplative life: the reader will recognise its points of similarity to Baudouin's "contention."

And for a mystical equivalent of the repetition of a form of words, listen to the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*:—

"If we would intentively pray for getting of good, let us cry either with word or with thought or with desire, nought else nor no more words but this word 'God' ";

and again,

[7] Chapter xx.

"Fill thy spirit with the ghostly meaning of this word 'Sin,' and without any special beholding unto any kind of sin, whether it be venial or deadly. And cry thus ghostly ever upon one: Sin! Sin! Sin! out! out! out! This ghostly cry is better learned of God by the proof than of any man by word. For it is best when it is in pure spirit, without special thought or any pronouncing of word. On the same manner shalt thou do with this little word 'God': and mean God all, and all God, so that nought work in thy wit and in thy will but only God." [8]

Here, then, the mystics and the psychologists are at one in pointing out a method—for this is what it amounts to—whereby we may *wittingly affect the character of the Unconscious.* It is a comforting reflection—to us who in these days are learning so much about the influence of the Unconscious on our general life! We are justified, I am sure, in insisting that the highest form of autosuggestion must be Christian. If "Day by day and in every respect, etc.," can do so much, what limits, it may be asked, can be set to the power of suggestions made to our Unconscious by the indwelling Christ Himself while we lay open our souls to Him in prayer? What of the influence of such autosuggestions as "Day by day the love, and the gentleness, and the purity of Christ constrain me more and more"?

People sometimes ask of Autosuggestion, as they do of Psychoanalysis: Can it be combined with religion? And there are not a few devout souls who are disturbed by the suspicion that if autosuggestion of the Coué type can gradually transform a person's character, prayer—or at any rate that kind of prayer which has the soul's own spiritual growth for its ob-

[8] *The Cloud of Unknowing,* chapter xl.

ject—may come to be considered unnecessary. What we said in a former chapter about psychoanalysis may be applied in this connexion also. The value of Christian prayer is the value of autosuggestion *multiplied and enhanced* by the Christian certainty that the Spirit of Christ dwells in our hearts [9]; that there is a real *mystica unio* between our personalities and that of our Lord Himself; and that, therefore, as I have suggested, autosuggestion which is deliberately transformed into prayer is suggestion directed, not merely to our own individual human Unconscious, but to the indwelling Christ Himself.

If this view of at least some forms of prayer be accepted, we may go on to point out the great value and importance of short "ejaculatory" prayers made in moments during the day's work, when we pause to realise the presence of God within us and about us; of "affective acts"—acts of faith and hope and love; and, I would add, of the judicious and intelligent use of the rosary. Lastly, some of us may well combine what we have been taught, and learnt for ourselves, as to the meaning of prayer, with what Baudouin, Coué, and others have shown us of the value of autosuggestion, in order to make a better use henceforward of those precious moments after Communion, when our hearts are filled with thankfulness to our Lord for His sacramental Presence just vouchsafed to us. Then, surely, is the time above all others when we shall be able most easily and most naturally to wait upon Him and renew our strength.

We conclude, then, that we may learn something

[9] It has been pointed out (K. E. Kirk: *Some Principles of Moral Theology,* p. 145) that the "heart" of the New Testament writers is probably to be identified with the Unconscious of modern psychology. *Cp.* S. Matt. xii, 34; xv, 19.

from the apostles of Autosuggestion. But it seems advisable, in any discussion of the ways in which their teaching may be applied to prayer, to keep very clearly in our minds certain characteristics which any kind of prayer must possess if it is to be truly *Christian*.

To begin with, Christian prayer is the lifting up of the soul to *God*: it is the soul's share in that communion with God which constitutes religion. As I have insisted before in this volume, religion means a *personal relationship* between God and the soul, and prayer is an essential part of man's share in the maintenance of that relationship. There can be no question, then, of dignifying any form of autosuggestion by the name of prayer which does not rest upon and refer to God from beginning to end. It may or may not be true, for example, as the more enthusiastic of Coué's disciples claim, that a course of autosuggestion, of the type he advises, produces effects on character: that to tell yourself, on rising, that you are becoming more unselfish and better-tempered day by day, does as a matter of fact, as time goes on, make you more unselfish and better-tempered. But, if it is true, it has nothing to do with prayer (though, of course, any Christian must insist that it has a great deal to do with God!—or, rather, He with it). Such an autosuggestion can only be called prayer if, that mental condition having been reached which Baudouin calls "contention" and which seems also to be referred to in the passage quoted from S. Teresa, the mind is at once occupied [10] with the thought of *God*, of His will that you should be sweet-tempered

[10] *Cp.* the italicised words in the quotation from Baudouin on p. 90.

and unselfish, and of the power to become so which He vouchsafes without stint to those who seek such things from Him and trust His love to bestow them. To put the matter in another way: whereas in autosuggestion the mind is mainly occupied with itself, in prayer it is occupied with God, and the greater the self-consciousness the less effective the prayer.

This leads us to another point. There can be no doubt whatever that the extraordinary vogue which autosuggestion and similar evangels are enjoying at the present time is the expression of a *zeitgeist* which regards bodily health as the be-all and end-all of human happiness.[11] Now, we may be thankful that Christian thought is moving further and further away from the belief that sickness and disease are invariably the manifestations of the anger of God, and that the appropriate comment on a peculiarly distressing accident, or on an earthquake or shipwreck, is to resign ourselves to it as "the will of God." We are learning—after having forgotten it for many centuries—the truth that health of body and soundness of limb are normally as much the will of God for His children as health of soul. But there is a great gulf between this position and that of saying that never, under any circumstances whatever, can it be the will of a loving Father that His children should suffer physical or mental pain. It is surely obvious that no one could go as far as this who had really grasped the significance of the fact that mankind has been redeemed through the Passion of Christ. To go so far, again, would be to nullify the whole meaning of Christian asceticism, and to ignore the countless men and women

[11] The vogue of Christian Science is, of course, due to the same spirit.

in every age who have by the grace of God accepted suffering as a means of closer fellowship with the Saviour who for their sakes endured the Agony and the Cross, and have made of it a stepping-stone to the development of character and moral and spiritual triumph. Christian prayer in regard to bodily health, then—as indeed in regard to all other matters—must be subject to the *proviso,* Thy Will be done. We can have no truce with that essentially pagan view of prayer which regards it as man's attempt to bend or alter the will of God. It is as far as possible from being anything of the kind. Rather, it is man's effort to bring his will—wayward and ignorant and sinful—into harmony with the holy and loving will of an all-wise Father. Every truly Christian prayer is, therefore, an expansion of that one clause in the Lord's Prayer: *Thy* Will be done.

The importance of these considerations in the present connexion is clear. I would urge that prayer which takes the form (in the way I have indicated) of autosuggestion should for the most part be confined to what are commonly called "spiritual" things. After all, we can hardly go wrong if our autosuggestions are concerned with things about which there can be no possibility of doubt as to what the will of God for us is. We do know for certain that He wants us to be pure and loving and holy, to manifest in our daily lives the manifold fruits of the Spirit: and this to the highest degree which our bodily health allows. And by limiting our autosuggestive prayer to such things as these, it may be added, we shall avoid the real danger of regarding prayer as having the remotest connexion with magic. When autosuggestion of the Coué type fails, the subject is told that it is because he "did not

think 'I will do, or I will be, so and so' hard enough"; rather as if the "thinking" were a charm which only wanted using precisely in the right way to be automatically and mechanically effective. But when prayer fails—or seems to fail—in nine cases out of ten it is precisely because of one of two reasons: either we are concentrating our minds on what *we* desire, without reference to, or any effort to discover, the will of God in the matter; or we are praying for material things which we have no guarantee that God will invariably grant in answer to prayer. Prayer is not a dodge.

One last word. The teaching and methods of Coué have been keenly criticised by Dr. William Brown, one of the ablest of English psychologists.[12] Part of this criticism consists in pointing out that, in the case of nearly all neuroses, autosuggestion is more effective when preceded by some attempt at self-knowledge (*autognosis*) on the part of the patient, and that in some cases autosuggestion may do positive harm unless an actual psychoanalysis has taken place first. If, in accordance with our method, we look for the spiritual application of this view, it is surely not far to seek. All true prayer must be based upon, and continually reinforced by, earnest self-examination and repentance.

[12] *Suggestion and Mental Analysis.*

Chapter VII

PSYCHOLOGY AND THE PROBLEM OF FREE WILL

IN THESE chapters on current psychological inquiries and the lessons to be drawn from them in regard to matters of religion, I have hitherto, for the most part, laid stress on the support they lend to Christian principles and practices. But it would be idle to pretend that this apparent *rapprochement* is the whole picture. So far from this being the case, it would be, on the whole, a more accurate account of the situation to say that where the protagonists of the New Psychology seem to support religion they do so unwittingly and indirectly, and that when they discuss the subject directly, we find them, almost to a man, emphatically and uncompromisingly antichristian.

I heard recently of a lady doctor, an able woman, whose study of psychoanalysis had completely undermined her religious faith. After a course of lectures on psychoanalysis, one of the audience, a girl of twenty-five, told a friend of mine what a relief it was to her to feel that she need no longer reproach herself for a certain bad habit: the lecturer had made it perfectly clear that the habit in question emanated from her Unconscious, that it was probably due to the instinctive repression of some unpleasant experience in childhood, and that she herself as a conscious being was in no way responsible for it.

Such cases as these are by no means rare: and the reader who has followed our inquiry up to the present point will have little difficulty in understanding them. In this and the following chapter I propose to give some attention to certain conclusions which appear directly to contravene what may be broadly described as the Christian philosophy of life.

Let me begin, however, by calling attention to an important point of contact between psychology and religion. These investigations would seem to give definite support to the essential truth underlying the doctrine of Original Sin—the truth, namely, that, whether or not there was ever a Fall, at least we are fallen. The doctrine of Original Sin is sometimes stated in forms apparently calculated to alienate the modern mind; as when it is put forward, for instance, in such a way as practically to equate original sin and guilt: or when certain writers speak about natural impulses and appetites as if they were in themselves sinful, apart from any development of them in the individual: or when it is asserted that man was created *perfect,* and that his present condition is entirely attributable to the sin of Adam. The truth is, rather, that the instincts which we share with the animals and which we inherit from our own remote animal ancestry are *in themselves* simply non-moral: they cannot with any meaning be spoken of as either good or evil. They are the material out of which either *goodness or sin* may be fashioned by desire and volition. "By nature we are perhaps not wicked, but also by nature we are not morally good. Moral goodness is something to be won." Even so, ordinary experience and commonsense observation seem to suggest that we are more evidently "not good by nature" than "not wicked by

nature." The instincts seem, that is to say, more obviously *fomes peccati* than the material of goodness. The line of least resistance, followed from the cradle to the grave, would seem to produce wickedness rather than goodness. This is the truth at the basis of the doctrine of Original Sin: and this is the truth supported, surely, by psychology. Left to themselves, uneducated and uncontrolled, the instincts are more likely to develop hellwards than heavenwards.

A serious problem seems at first sight to be raised by the doctrine of Psychological Determinism. It will be remembered that in a previous chapter I referred to Freud's view, shared by many other psychologists, that the whole psychic sphere is rigidly determined, utterly conditioned by external circumstances and events of the past. It is indeed obvious that a thoroughgoing application of the principles enunciated in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* must result in a purely mechanistic philosophy and the elimination of all belief in human freedom or in any supernatural Power capable of aiding and reinforcing human thought and conduct. Freud himself does not shrink from this conclusion: indeed he insists on it. The final chapter of the book referred to—the climax of all that has gone before—makes his position perfectly clear, and it is emphasised in the latest of his works to be translated into English.[1]

Now, I am not a philosopher, and I am not competent to deal adequately, from a philosophical point of view, with the hoary problem of free will. But I venture the following résumé of my own reading and reflection on the subject.

[1] *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.).

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Psychic determinism does not stand alone. It is based upon the *a priori* conviction that the universe is a closed system, the creation and the result of purely mechanical laws; that the laws of matter and motion are adequate to explain all phenomena whatever, including those into which the operation of vital or mental processes appears to enter; and that what are called the "laws" of nature (as if they were a set of *rules*) explain as well as describe phenomena.

Each of these theses, I should maintain, is capable of refutation: though it is impossible to undertake the task here. But I do not know a more cogent and summary exposure of rigid determinism in the general sense of that word than the following passage from one of Bishop Temple's earlier books:—

"Determinism, the theory that everything is constituted by its relation to other things—that it consists, in fact, of these relations—is seen to be fallacious as soon as its application is universally extended. It tells us that in a system A B C, A is only A in virtue of its relations to B and C; B and C determine it as A. And that seems easy; but why is B, B? It must be determined as B by A and C. And similarly C by A and B. If then each term is nothing till its external relations constitute it, we are confronted with the astonishing spectacle of nothing at all developing internal differentiation by the interaction of its non-existent parts. We may echo the question which Coleridge asks about the self-differentiation of Schelling's Absolute—*Unde hæc nihili in nihila tam portentosa trans-nihilatio?*" [2]

It is clear, of course, that no ethical system can be built upon a rigid doctrine of psychic determinism. Temptation is an impossibility, and moral responsi-

[2] *The Nature of Personality*, p. 12.

bility a mockery, unless the freedom of the will and "spontaneous causal efficiency" be realities.

But what, precisely, does this "freedom of the will" imply? If it means that there is such a thing as sheer unmotived volition, it is obviously untrue. Such volition is not possible even to God: His "freedom," in this sense, is limited by His own nature. He is, therefore, strictly "determined," though of course wholly *self*-determined. Nor is such "freedom" possible to man: his freedom is conditioned by his physical, mental, and moral constitution at any given stage of his development. There is no such thing, there can be no such thing as absolute unmotived volition. The Christian thinker, then, is under no obligation to defend that "popular notion, miscalled the doctrine of free will—philosophically foolish and theologically heretical—which suggests that the will is essentially a jack-in-the-box which crops up here and there when least expected." If there *were* such a faculty in the mind as a separate, free "will" in this sense, it would not be worth having. For the only kind of freedom worth the name is that self-determination, self-control, which comes as the result of educating and co-ordinating our instincts into sentiments, and our sentiments into one predominating purpose. The truly "free" man is not the one of whom no one can prophesy what he may or may not do next—the prey of every passing whim and fancy—but the one who can be relied on so utterly that we *can* foretell how, given the circumstances, he is sure to behave.

To quote Dr. Temple again:—

"A Person (as distinct from a thing, or a Brute) determines his reactions as much as anything else does. . . . The extent of the part played by a man's underived

contribution to the scheme of things cannot be calculated in any given case. That there is such a contribution is certain, and that it is effective is certain. And it is the basis of moral as distinct from legal responsibility. . . . Every individual has in him some underived element which assists in the determination of his conduct: if it were different, he and his conduct would be different." [3]

And in this reflection, as it seems to me, lies the answer to the objection that if, as we have seen reason to believe, inherited instincts and unconscious mental processes are the ultimate sources of all human conduct, a man's accountability for his sins is reduced almost to vanishing point. It is not so. A man's character is to an enormous extent what he makes it. And he makes it by repeated acts of choice, by the deliberate and largely-conscious formation of "sentiments," by bringing his own "underived contribution" to bear upon his environment—his environment in the widest sense, as including his own impulsive desires, *plus* external conditions social, intellectual and spiritual, *plus,* if he will—as the Christian would insist—the grace of God.

Some months ago there was a great outcry in the newspapers about the reprieve—to a criminal lunatic asylum—of a man who had been sentenced to death for the peculiarly brutal and abominable murder of a woman. The issue was hopelessly confused by red herrings anent the amenities of Broadmoor, the social status of the criminal, and the villainy of the Home Secretary; but the main demand of most of the frantic letters in the Press was that the man should hang, even though there was no room for doubt—unless, as in the

[3] *The Nature of Personality,* p. 19.

well-worn gibe, "expert witness" is just the superlative of "liar"—that he was insane (in the medical sense) at the time of his trial, and probably when he committed the murder. Now, there was one line of reasoning on which the demand for his execution might legitimately have been based: but it was not advanced by any of the letter-writers—nearly all of whom made the character of the crime their foundation-stone. It would have been at least *reasonable* to argue that, inasmuch as the man's insanity was indisputably the result of a deliberately chosen life of indulgence in nearly every form of vice, he was morally responsible for it, and (therefore) for the murder in which it culminated.

This example may serve to illustrate the line of argument adopted just now.

It is of the greatest importance that the precise point at issue between the determinists and their opponents should be clearly appreciated. A favourite opening of the determinist argument consists in pouring ridicule and abuse upon a "jack-in-the-box" theory of motiveless volition which no accredited defender of free will puts forward. Such abuse is entirely irrelevant. Of course it is *I* who choose, and "I" am in great part the result of past history, pre-natal as well as post-natal. The controversy revolves round the question, Is there any factor, however small, concerned in what appears to be a deliberate act of choice, which is not absolutely and entirely conditioned by this history on the one hand, and, on the other, the external circumstances acting on me at the moment of choice? In other words, is choice—not *without,* but—*between* motives possible? Even Dr. McDougall, in the chapter on "Volition" in *Social Psychology,* seems to imply

that there is no tenable half-way house between the most rigid determinism and "sheer" libertarianism. This is a misrepresentation of the issue, which is, rather, Is there *any* "underived contribution"?

The problem may be discussed from the point of view of ethics, psychology, or metaphysics. From the ethical standpoint, it is generally admitted by the most clear-sighted writers that determinism makes the task of moral philosophy well-nigh impossible. McDougall sees this. "If," he writes,

> "each of my actions is completely determined by antecedent conditions and processes that are partly within my own nature, partly in my environment, why should I make any moral effort? My conduct will be what it will be, the issue of conditions that existed and determined it in every detail long before I was born; therefore it would be foolish of me to take pains to choose the better course and to make efforts to realise it. This is the real crux of this dispute. This is the legitimate inference from determinism. This is its moral difficulty, which has seldom been squarely faced by its advocates, and never overcome by them." [4]

McDougall's answer to one part of this difficulty—the obvious implication that any kind of punishment for wrong-doing is itself stamped as immoral on the deterministic theory—consists in the equation of responsibility with accountability, and he urges that though no wrong-doer can help his wrong-doing, his punishment is justifiable in the hope that it may "modify his nature for the better." But this position seems to make *blame* or *censure* meaningless. And that is the real difficulty. The whole scheme of things seems to be so essentially irrational—in a universe governed by

[4] *An Introduction to Social Psychology*, p. 234.

law—if the murderer is no more responsible for his act than the weapon with which it is committed. We recall William James's comment:—

"Some *regrets* are pretty obstinate and hard to stifle—*regrets* for acts of wanton cruelty or treachery, for example, whether performed by others or by ourselves. Hardly any one can remain *entirely* optimistic after reading the confession of the murderer at Brockton the other day; how, to get rid of the wife whose continued existence bored him, he enveigled her into a desert spot, shot her four times, and then as she lay on the ground and said to him, 'You didn't do it on purpose, did you, dear?' replied 'No, I didn't do it on purpose,' as he raised a rock and smashed her skull. . . . We feel that though a perfect *mechanical* fit for the rest of the universe, such an occurrence is a bad *moral* fit. . . . But for the deterministic philosophy the murder, the sentence, and the prisoner's optimism were all necessary from eternity, and nothing else for a moment had the ghost of a chance of being put into their place." [5]

It may be objected that the universal experience of obligation, regret, remorse, merit, and desert—the feeling, I *need not* have done that, but I did it—prove nothing: they are delusions. But this objection seems to ignore the fact that we can clearly distinguish, in retrospect, between voluntary action and action that is *not* free. If our mental processes have any meaning or validity at all, the assertion that when the reader or I were last engaged in long and earnest wrestling with some temptation, conquest (if we succumbed) or defeat (if we won) was never a conceivable possibility, is flatly incredible.

Determinism is sometimes urged as a scientific postulate, without which no science of the mind is or

[5] *The Will to Believe*, p. 61.

can be possible. And in a limited sense, I suppose, we must admit this plea for an hypothesis adequate to serve as a working basis of inquiry. But we must refuse to allow it—reasonable and indeed necessary though it may be as the basis of psychological investigation and discussion—to be accorded the prestige of a demonstrated fact.

Before we can accept the doctrine of psychical determinism in its extreme form, two things must happen. In the first place, it must be shown not to conflict with the conclusions of other branches of science. But it is notorious that, outside psychology, deterministic and mechanistic theories are advanced to-day with much less confidence than they were twenty years ago [6]: among biologists, for instance, doctrines of "vitalism" in one form or another seem now to be the rule rather than the exception: the tendency of recent research is altogether away from purely mechanical interpretations of the facts.[7] Secondly, the doctrine must show a very strong *prima facie* probability of being the only possible—or at any rate the best possible—explanation of the phenomena on which it is based, the facts of mental life. This condition is does not satisfy.

With regard to Freud's defence of determinism, one has a feeling, in reading *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life,* that the author is trying to pack the facts into a theory too narrow, at any rate, to hold *all* of them. The reader has a curious suspicion, indeed, that Freud may himself be the victim of a "de-

[6] *Pace* Sir C. S. Sherrington and his presidential address to the British Association, 1922.

[7] *Cp.* Haldane's *Mechanism, Life, and Personality;* Driesch's *Science and Philosophy of the Oganism;* Thompson and Geddes' *Evolution.*

terminism complex"! Speaking in all seriousness, nothing is more likely. He is at no pains to conceal his anti-religious bias: can we exclude the possibility that his zeal for the extremest form of determinism is the product, less of unimpassioned reason than of unconsciously-motivated rationalisation?

We may notice in passing that Freud's teaching in this regard is not, apparently, accepted by all his disciples. Two sentences from Mr. A. G. Tansley's book, *The New Psychology and Its Relation to Life,* are worth quoting in this connexion:—

"We conclude, then, that reason, though incapable of initiating action, is indispensable as the co-ordinating and harmonising agency of the mind. . . . The New Psychology need not commit itself to the conclusion that the play of instinctive forces exhausts the meaning of the human soul." [8]

One of the classical discussions of the problem of free will and the nature of volition is to be found in the chapter on "Volition" in McDougall's *Social Psychology.* It is impossible even to summarise his exceedingly subtle and brilliant argument here. It must suffice to quote his carefully-worded explanation of the fundamental fact of true volition—the fact, namely, that the personality as a whole is thrown along the line of greatest resistance:—

"The conations, the desires, and aversions, arising within the self-regarding sentiment are the motive forces which, adding themselves to the weaker ideal motive in the case of moral effort, enable it to win the mastery over some stronger, coarser desire of our primitive animal nature and to banish from consciousness the idea of the

[8] *The New Psychology,* pp. 175, 269. (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.)

end of this desire. . . . We may define volition as the supporting or reinforcing of a desire or conation by the co-operation of an impulse excited within the system of the self-regarding sentiment." [9]

For a Christian philosopher or psychologist to adopt this view it is only necessary that he should add two *provisos*: first, that "spiritual" environmental factors are available for the development of the self-regarding sentiment; and secondly, that in true volition there is a (strictly minimal) "underived contribution." A footnote on pp. 235-6 of *Social Psychology* (quoted as an appendix to this chapter) gives ground for suggesting that McDougall himself might assent to this view. Opponents of determinism are not in the least concerned to deny the immense influence, in all conduct, of heredity, of the individual's past history and present character; or to question the strength of the pressure exerted by those layers of the mind outside conscious control or recognition.

APPENDIX

The note referred to above is as follows:—

"The most successful defence of indeterminism yet made is that of Dr. Schiller (*Studies in Humanism*). . . . He suggests that there may arise conjunctions of conditions whose issue is indeterminate in the sense that opposing forces are exactly balanced in an unstable equilibrium, which we might compare to that of a billiard ball balanced on a knife-edge. A strictly minimal force might then determine the issue in either direction, and so produce very important consequences; *e.g.* if the knife-edge were on the water-parting of the Rocky Mountains,

[9] *Op. cit.*, pp. 248, 249.

the ball might reach the Atlantic or the Pacific Ocean, according to the direction of this minimal force. Dr. Schiller points out truly enough that, for anything we know, such situations may occur in both the physical and moral spheres; for, if their issue is thus determined by some such minimal force that is not determined by antecedent conditions, the calculation of the strength of the opposing forces, with sufficient accuracy to enable us to discover the presence of this unconditioned factor, is beyond our power, and we shall probably never be able to make this calculation for the physical, and certainly never for the moral world. If this unconditioned factor is assumed to be in every case of strictly minimal strength the admission of its reality will not seriously undermine the principles of moral responsibility; but it will, as pointed out above, introduce an incalculable element among the factors which the student of society has to try to take into account, and, therefore, will make difficult, if not impossible, the attempt to construct a science of history and of society. Whether it would lighten in any degree the moral difficulty of determinism discussed above is a more difficult and subtle problem; I cannot at present see that it can have any such result, save in the following way: it would allow us to believe in 'a power not ourselves, which makes for righteousness,' and such a belief might encourage and stimulate us to make efforts towards the realisation of the purpose of that power. Since, then, a decision of this question cannot be attained on empirical grounds, it remains open to us to postulate indeterminism; and if such postulation makes for the predominance of right conduct, it is difficult to find any good reason for refusing to follow James and Schiller when they ask us to commit ourselves to it" (pp. 235-6).

With this passage may be compared the remark (on p. 234) that the view of T. H. Green and Professor Stout, who "recognise will as a fundamental faculty co-ordinate with cognition" is "in very general terms the theory of action which I am defending."

Chapter VIII

RELIGIOUS ORIGINS AND SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

I PASS finally to a brief consideration of two particular applications of the findings of recent psychology of which increasing use is being made at the present day, and with which it is important that we should familiarise ourselves. They are concerned respectively with Religious Origins and Religious Experience. They are often put forward in conjunction, but for our present purpose may conveniently be discussed separately.

The reader will remember that the modern investigation of dreams tends to show: first, that the majority of dreams are symbolical; secondly, that the latent content of a vast number of them is grossly sexual, judged by our conscious moral standard; thirdly, that a great many dreams are "typical"—that is to say, that certain dream-objects and dream-incidents are invariably and in all persons the symbolised expressions of the same wishes;[1] fourthly, that some of the commoner dream-symbols are to be referred to the experience of our earliest years.

On the basis of these propositions—considered in conjunction with the human tendency to introversion—a certain school of writers has built the theory that,

[1] See note on p. 32 for the sense in which Freud uses the word "wish."

in the words of one of them, "the myth is the fragment of the infantile soul-life of the people." [2] It is suggested, in fact, that a great many religious beliefs may be accounted for as the expressions of racial wishes, just as dreams are the expressions of individual wishes. It is well known that almost identical myths are found in widely separated parts of the world: this, we are told, is partly due to the existence of typical racial wishes (analogous to typical individual wishes), and partly to the operation of herd instinct. Further, myths, like dreams, are symbolical, so that their real meaning is to be sought behind their "manifest content": and, to make the parallel complete, the "latent content" of myths, as of dreams, is sexual in character.[3]

It is when psychoanalysis in pressed into the service of such preposterous nonsense as this that the common charge of its exclusive concern with the subject and ideas of sex contains an element of truth. I should not refer to the theory at all were it not for the fact —of which every one familiar with psychoanalytical journals (rather than books) in this country and America is perfectly well aware—that it is rapidly becoming an almost general *assumption* among the advanced school. I submit that the following considerations are more than sufficient to refute it:—

(1) The theory stands or falls with two things: the symbolic nature of dreams, and the sexual meaning of dream-symbols. It is significant that these are precisely the theories most frequently criticised by non-Freudian analysts. Outside the inner Freudian

[2] Karl Abraham, *Dreams and Myths.*

[3] It is for this reason that the actual illustrations used by the school of writers referred to cannot well be quoted in a non-technical and "popular" volume such as the present.

circle there is a growing disposition to believe that many dreams are merely recollective, and not symbolic at all, and that, in those cases in which a dream is symbolic, the symbol may disguise some non-sexual repression.

(2) The psychologist who equates religion and sexuality can only maintain his thesis by ignoring a large number of relevant facts, by entirely discounting the evidence of religious experience, by treating as irrelevant the essentially *historic* origins of the greater religions of mankind, and by simply ruling out of court the conclusions of ninety per cent. of the experts in his own department of science. There is no general disposition among psychologists to believe that the religious sentiment has its roots solely in the instinct of sex. That instinct, no doubt, plays an important contributory part; but it is suppementary, not primary. (Thus Ribot, Leuba, and McDougall emphasise the primary importance of the instinct of fear.)

May we not add that the writers in question are in grave danger of repressing their sense of humour?—with what horrid peril to their own Unconscious we would not, of course, presume to say! Certainly the phallic theory of religious origins and religious experience must always seem quite extraordinarily funny to the religious mind! It is refreshing to turn to the famous footnote to the chapter on "Religion and Neurology" in James's *Varieties*:—

"Why not equally call religion an aberration of the digestive function, and prove one's point by the worship of Bacchus and Ceres? . . . In fact, one might almost as well interpret religion as a perversion of the respiratory function. The Bible is full of the language of respiratory oppression: 'Hide not thine ear at my breath-

ings; my groaning is not hid from thee; my heart panteth; my strength faileth me; my bones are hot with my roaring all the night long; as the hart panteth after the water brooks, so my soul panteth after thee, O my God.' *God's Breath in Man* is the title of the chief work of our best-known American mystic (Thomas Lake Harris); and in certain non-Christian countries the foundation of all religious discipline consists in regulation of the inspiration and expiration. . . ."[4]

The other criticism of religion to which some reference must be made is of more importance: it is directed mainly against what is commonly called "spiritual experience."

What is spiritual experience? It is too often assumed that the phrase refers exclusively to the kind of phenomena described and dissected in massive tomes on the psychology of religion. But there is a twofold objection to any such limitation of the term. In the first place, writers who accept it are apt to forget the existence of factors which they do not explicitly discuss; and, in particular, the religious life of the normal man or woman. But ordinary people are of immense importance. There are unquestionably large numbers of people who have never *consciously* undergone any transcendental experience whatever, never seen visions nor heard interior voices, never been "converted" in any catastrophic sense, never lived through a whole hour which they could subsequently isolate and say of it, "*then*—and *there*—and *so*, a Higher Power had me in its grip: by that experience, if by no other, I *know!* Whereas I was blind, now I see." To say of such persons that they have no spiritual experience would be ludicrously untrue. They have; and it is a

[4] Page 11.

real and formative factor in their lives; they would cut out their tongues rather than deny it. But it is a more difficult thing to describe, in such a way as to interest psychological professors,[5] than other and more striking varieties. Perhaps it can only be adequately expressed in terms of its chief result, which is, in brief, a certain balanced and confident outlook upon human existence and the problems of life. Such an outlook is the cumulative result of countless occasions —none of them, perhaps, noticed at the time—when religious belief (and conduct in accordance therewith) has brought strength to the soul and satisfaction to the mind. Importance is not to be measured by sensational content.

Spiritual experience may be taken to include three classes of phenomena: first, such unusual and abnormal occurrences as levitations, visions, *stigmata,* and the like; secondly, less rare, but still not universal phenomena such as "conversions," extraordinarily vivid apprehensions of the presence of God, and so forth; thirdly, the normal religious life of the ordinary man or woman. It is perhaps inevitable that in popular thought the first two of these classes should be regarded as the most cogent indications of the existence of a spiritual Reality external to the soul with which the soul may and does hold communion. Of recent years this popular conclusion has also been made great use of by theological writers, so that it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that at the present day the favourite argument in support of (almost every variety

[5] Such "ordinary people" are the very last to indulge in the self-introspection demanded by *questionnaires:* they are more likely to consign them direct to the waste-paper basket.

of) religious belief is this "Argument from Spiritual Experience."

No doubt the curious revival of interest in Mysticism is partly responsible for this; but it probably represents, also, a deliberate shifting of the ground on which the religious view of things is to be defended. Until recently, the most common rationalistic attack came from the side of cosmology, biology, and history; and, superficially at any rate, it was exceedingly formidable. What seems to have happened as the result of this combined assault is that, consciously or only half-consciously, apologists have been looking for a really impregnable position, and that they believe they have found it in the facts of religious experience. Those hackneyed but splendid lines from F. W. H. Myers' *S. Paul* put the case in a nutshell:—

"Whoso has felt the Spirit of the Highest
Cannot confound nor doubt Him nor deny:
Yea, with one voice, O world, tho' thou deniest,
Stand thou on that side, for on this am I.

Who that one moment has the least descried Him
Dimly and faintly, hidden and afar,
Doth not despise all excellence beside Him,
Pleasure and powers that are not and that are—

Yea, amid all men bear himself thereafter
Smit with a solemn and a sweet surprise,
Dumb to their scorn, and turning on their laughter
Only the dominance of earnest eyes."

Nevertheless, we must recognise that upholders of the Argument from Spiritual Experience as Christianity's final and invulnerable rampart are on less certain ground than they imagine. It is attacked from more than one quarter.

To begin with, precisely the same claim is made, not only in behalf of all possible—and mutually exclusive—varieties of "Christianity," but of all the great religions of the world. Close parallels to the first of the three classes of spiritual experience I have enumerated are to be found in Buddhism and Hinduism, while every serious discussion of "conversion" devotes some attention to non-Christian examples. Further, the modern spiritist bases his whole claim on the "experiences" of the *séance;* while there seems to be little doubt that the effect of certain drugs and anæsthetics bears a close resemblance to some at least of the characteristics of "ecstasy" or "ravishment" as described by the classical Christian mystics.

Further, we cannot ignore the fact that spiritual experience is broadly determined by *a priori* religious beliefs, nor forget the influence of herd instinct and the importance of suggestion. And these considerations apply, observe, to the *content* of spiritual experience as well as (more obviously) to its *interpretation.* The feelings of a Catholic and a Protestant present at Mass—the one believing, the other not believing in the Real Presence of Christ under the veils of bread and wine—are not likely to be the same: and if they were the same, the one worshipper would ascribe them to the Presence, the other to some factor described in wholly different terms.

So far, then, as this Argument relies—as it mainly does rely, in popular theology—on the more unusual kinds of spiritual experience, it is far from being as immune against criticism as is generally supposed.

(We may notice in passing the somewhat curious fact that appeal is not more generally made to the balance and equanimity and "fruits of the spirit" in

general enjoyed and displayed in the religious life of the "ordinary" Christian. This class of experience is at any rate less open to some of the criticisms just suggested: and the Christian apologist need not fear the pragmatic test. But even here a complication arises from the fact that among Christians themselves the dictum *quot homines tot sententia* holds true: some Christians hold, for instance, a theory as to the meaning of the death of Christ, claiming to be verified by the corporate experience of numberless souls in all ages, which other Christians believe to be flatly immoral. However, the Argument from Experience, in the form in which it is commonly stated and in which we are discussing it, does not, for whatever reason, make much appeal to this class of experience.)

A final objection, from the point of view of psychology, insists that, in the Argument we are considering, the word "experience" is used in an illegitimate way, as including a "fact of consciousness," or a series of such facts, *plus* a particular interpretation of it. But if the word "experience" is to be used in the only sense sanctioned by philosophy or psychology, it can only, we are told, imply a purely subjective mental occurrence: it cannot be held to include an interpretation of that occurrence assigning it to some source outside and independent of the mind of which it forms a part. This criticism is developed in Professor Leuba's *Psychological Study of Religion;* I quote the following sentences from the eleventh chapter:—

"The validity of the religious states of consciousness is precisely of the same sort as any other states of consciousness: they are absolute, undeniable, only so long as they are considered merely as the expression of a subject, and no longer. . . . Should God act in this manner

[*i.e.* as the Argument from Experience assumes] nothing ought to be easier than to show in the life of feeling and of thought disturbances not depending upon known natural causes. . . . The fact is that, in proportion as psychology advances, the apparent anomalies of the religious life are more and more completely explained according to known laws. . . . The hope to lift a theology based on experience out of the sphere of science is preposterous, since whatever appears in consciousness is material for psychology. . . . A theology that should remain within the domain accessible to science would be deprived of the right to any opinion on the objective reality of its objects and on the universal validity of its propositions."

The chapter from which this quotation is taken is perhaps the *locus classicus* of the objection we are discussing. It is therefore pertinent to observe that it bristles with assumptions which beg the whole question at issue. We may notice one or two of them.

Leuba's reference to "causes," "explanations," and "laws" is merely disingenuous. A scientific "explanation" is no more than an account of an observed invariable sequence of certain "causes" and effects. But the "causes" thus laid bare are "secondary" or "efficient" causes—causes only in Mill's sense of the word, "a cause which is itself a phenomenon without reference to the ultimate cause of anything." With ultimate and "final" causes the so-called "explanations" of science have nothing whatever to do. And it is high time that men of science ceased to speak of natural "laws" as if they were a set of *rules* to which phenomena had to conform—and as if we knew all the rules. What are called the "laws of nature" are the descriptions, given by science after observation of the facts, of *how* things happen: they are nothing more. Strictly speaking, they "explain" nothing.

And so psychology, the "science of behaviour," is properly concerned with the *How,* not the *Why* of behaviour (including religious and all other states of consciousness). It is entirely outside its province to pronounce as to the truth, or the ultimate origin, or the validity of religious experience: it can do no more than describe and dissect the *mechanism* of such experience. The scientist who draws metaphysical conclusions from psychological *data* is himself using the method which he condemns as illegitimate when employed in the Argument from Experience. What is sauce for the theological goose should be sauce for the psychological gander. It is of course true, as Professor Leuba insists, that "whatever appears in consciousness is material for psychology." But whether there are any external realities corresponding to the religious ideas, etc., which appear in consciousness is not a question for psychology at all, but for theology, metaphysics, and history.

We conclude, then, that Leuba's criticism of religion is largely based on an illegitimate idea of the functions and limitations of psychology. Nevertheless, it should be a warning to the Christian thinker of the danger of building too much on the facts of religious experience *considered by themselves.*

But the psychological treatment of spiritual experience does not end with negative criticism.

It was once the fashion among rationalistic critics of Christianity to say, "We do not intend to refute the Christian religion: we propose to explain it." Now, at first sight it may seem that our new knowledge of the workings of the mind is in a fair way towards enabling us to do this. For—to put the matter as briefly as possible—it is evident that a

plausible case can be made out for the thesis that any religious belief can be accounted for as the result of the mind's instinctive effort to attain peace and to avoid interior conflict. The mind *"projects"* the idea of God—so this argument runs—in order to satisfy its own sense of incompleteness and isolation. It projects the idea of Immortality, to compensate for the obvious inequalities and defects of this world. It projects the idea of a Saviour, to satisfy at once its own sense of shortcoming and its consciousness of impotence to deal with it. It projects the idea of Sin, because of its own failure to respond completely to the voice of the herd. Various conceptions of the nature of God are due to the various needs of the herds which hold them: "God always stands for what is felt to be in the interests of humanity." [6] Finally, Christian apologetic is the supreme example of rationalisation, the *post factum* manufacture of "reasons" for beliefs based on instinct and propagated by herd suggestion.

The full reply to this argument would occupy a volume. It would insist on the logical conclusion that if the whole ground of spiritual experience is indeed covered by the mind's "projections," then *all* the activities of the mind—reason and criticism among them —must be held to be futile and invalid, and certainty or real knowledge on any conceivable subject utterly hopeless of attainment. It would suggest to the critic that the weapon of "projection" is two-edged, and ask him on what grounds he rules out the possibility that his poor opinion of religion may be the projection of his own weaknesses. It would take its stand on the claim that the religious hypothesis, because it is

[6] Tansley, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

simpler and more direct, is a *more scientific* explanation of religious experience than the hypothesis of "projection." And it would deny the critic's wholly unscientific assumption that spiritual experience, unlike experience of other kinds, can never be regarded as a valid guide to fact.

But even these are points of minor importance in comparison with what is perhaps the only answer to the whole of this type of criticism which we can regard as really satisfactory and final.

It is significant that the best Christian theologians have never maintained that religious experience, feeling, or conviction is its own sufficient evidence. The Church has always made it a condition of confidently ascribing any spiritual experience whatever to the God in whom Christians believe, that it should correspond, in respect of (1) its nature, (2) its apparent significance and (3) its results, with what *on other grounds* she believes and teaches about the character of God and the nature of His dealings with men.

On other grounds: that is the point. And of these the most important is the historical. *The ultimate basis of the Christian religion is historical.* It will be remembered that on a previous page we had occasion to observe that, broadly speaking, the interpretation of all spiritual experience is determined by the *a priori* intellectual beliefs (and, we may add—though this does not concern us here—the general character) of the individual. This is equally true of the interpretation put upon such experience by an outside critic. There is no avoiding the conclusion that an absolutely cold and impartial approach to the problems of religious experience is well-nigh impossible. The Christian philosopher or psychologist, at any rate, makes no

pretence of such an approach. He begins with the conviction, reached mainly on other grounds, that once, on the field of history, in the full light of day, at a particular time and place, certain events took place which, together with their derivative effects ever since, can only be rightly understood as a direct Revelation of God to man. The Christian claim in this matter may be justified or not: this is not the place to discuss that question. But the claim is there: and it is fundamental. For myself, I should be prepared to say that if the claim could be shown to be *not* justifiable, I should feel bound to admit the possibility that my own spiritual experience was simply the creation of my own mind strengthened, through herd instinct, and so on, by the (equally deluded) religion of other people.

It is quite impossible to exaggerate the importance of insisting on its historical origin as the primary basis of Christianity. Christian experience cannot legitimately be isolated, either for criticism or defence, from the Events in which it is rooted. The Christian life does not arise spontaneously and *e vacuo,* and the psychologist must consider its roots if he is to appraise its fruits: he must face the question, What think ye of Christ? No man, seeking to formulate a philosophy of life, can afford to ignore relevant facts: no teacher is justified in offering a philosophy for the world's acceptance which flagrantly ignores relevant facts. The Fact of Christ is relevant: and the Christian has a right to ask that the psychological critic shall show some signs of having really faced the significance, not only of the spiritual experience of two thousand years, nor only of the fruits of that ex-

perience in ethics and art and culture, but of the historical foundation without which neither the experience nor its fruits would exist for his investigation and dissection.

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